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PC GAMES

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February 1990
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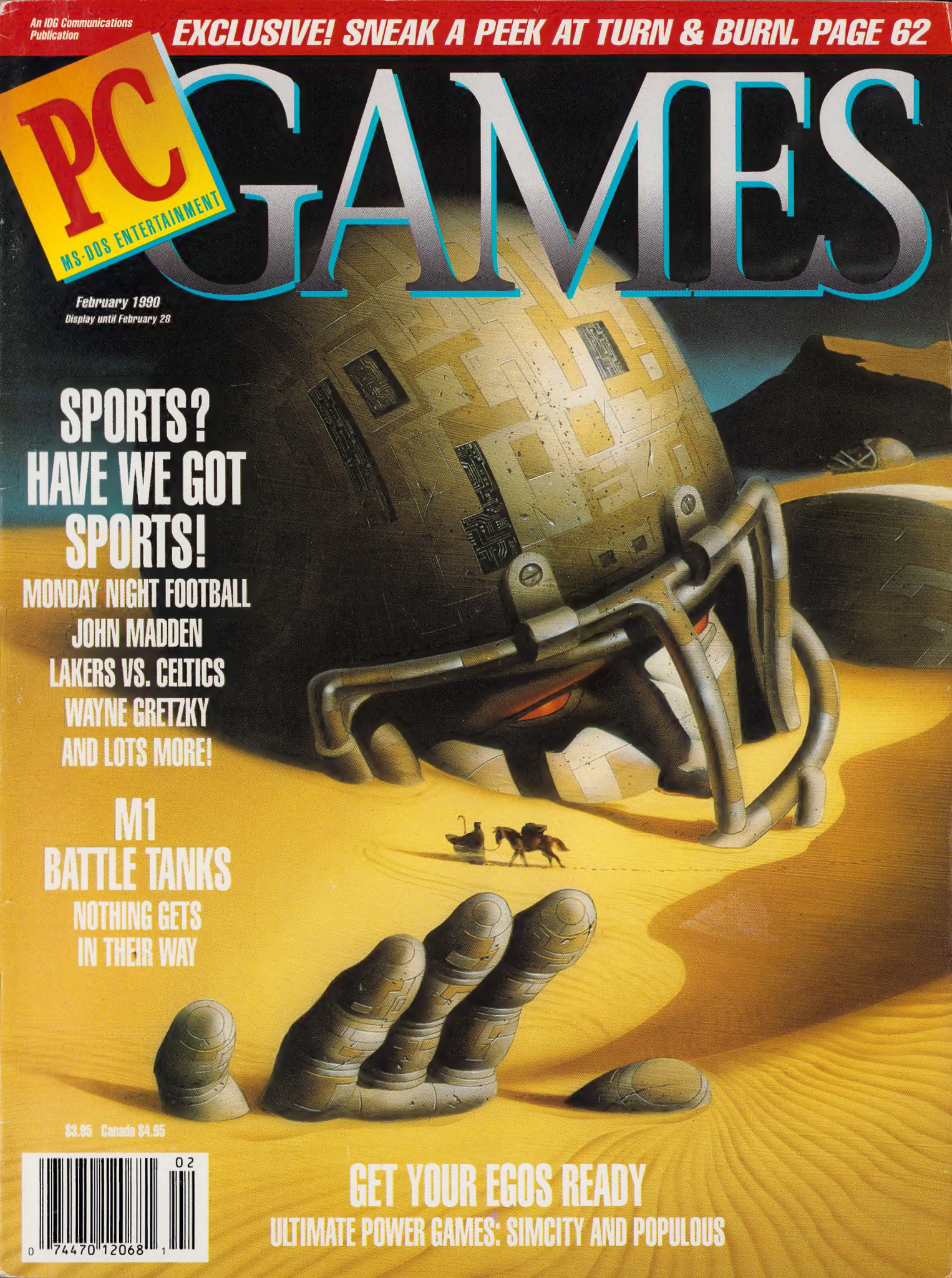

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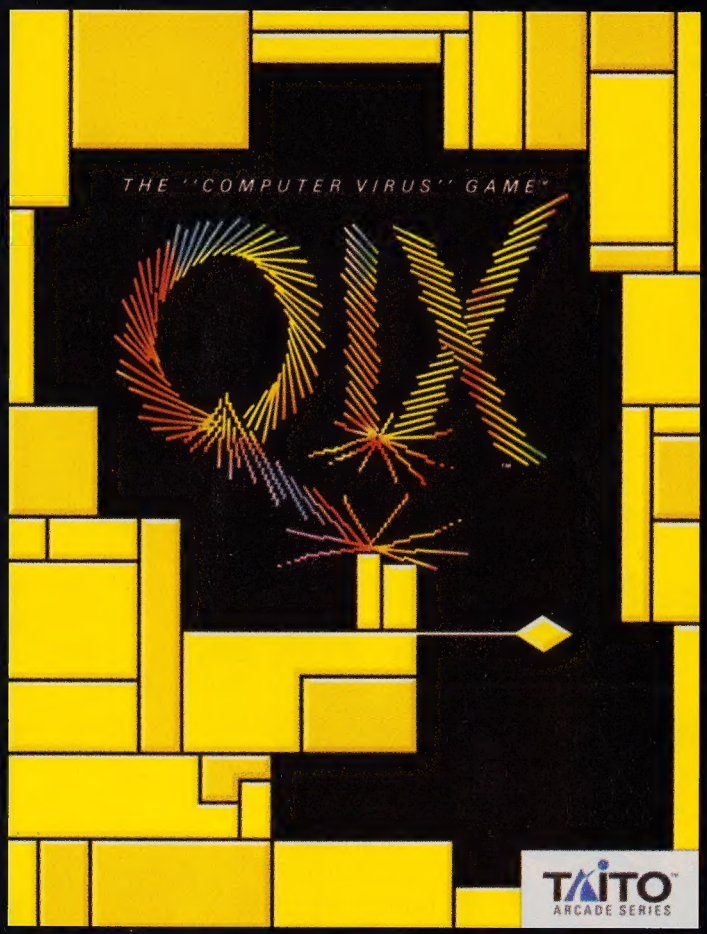

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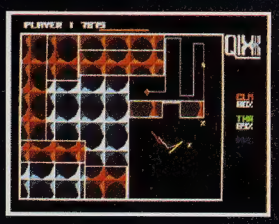
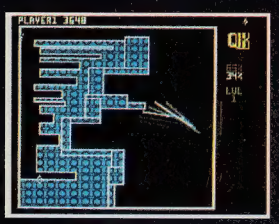
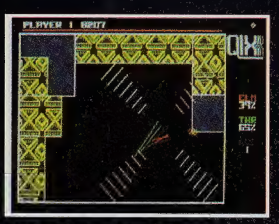

Actual Atari screen.


Actual C/64 screen.


Actual Amiga screen.

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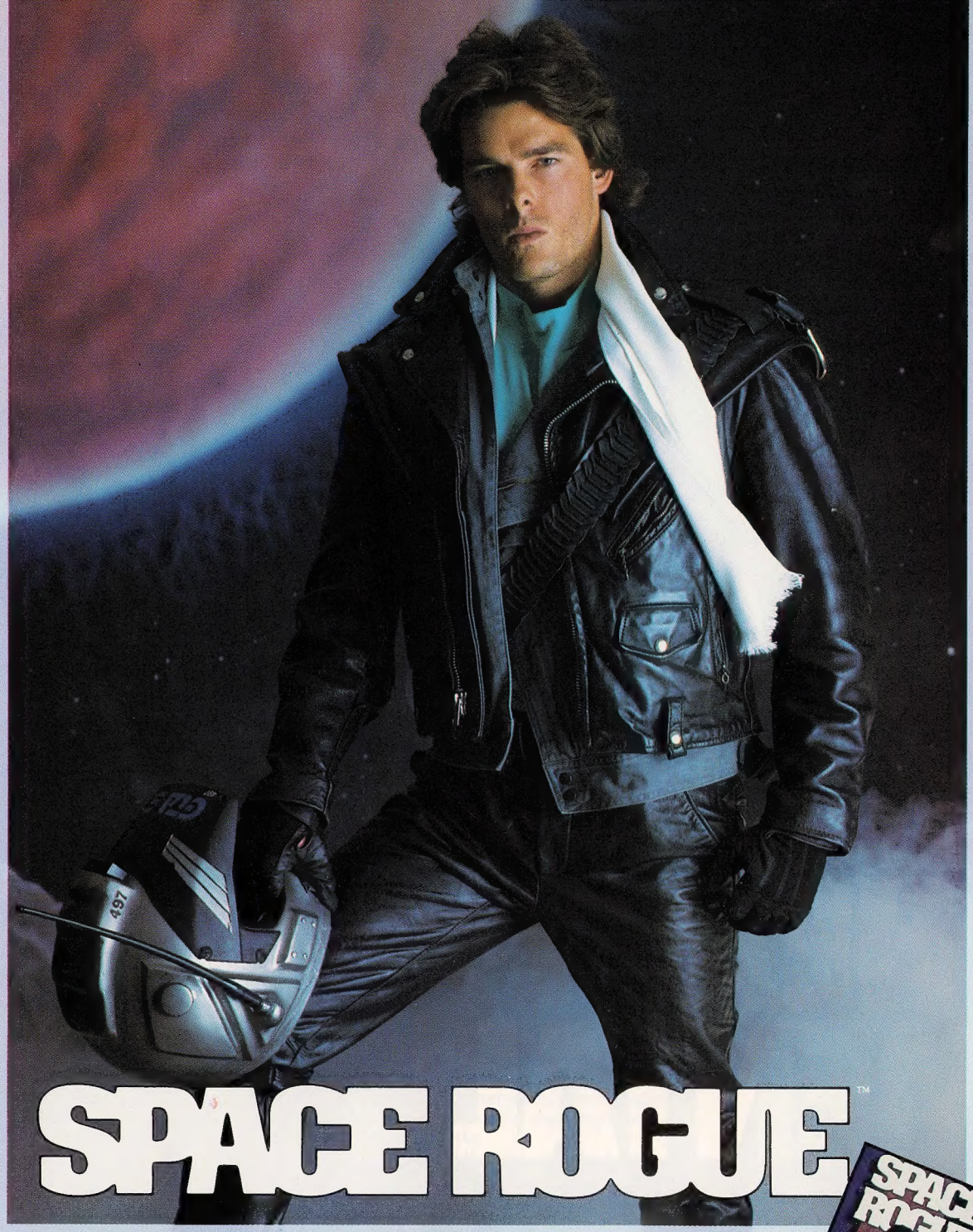

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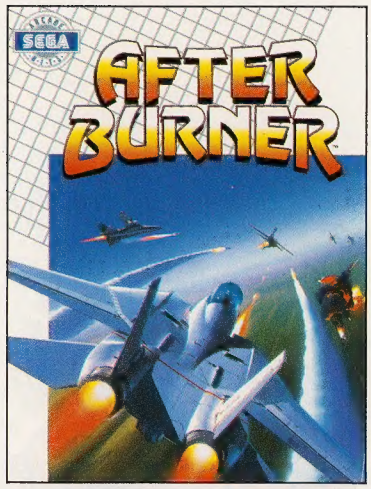

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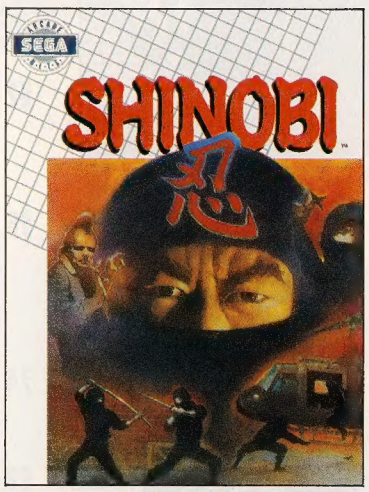
SHINOBI



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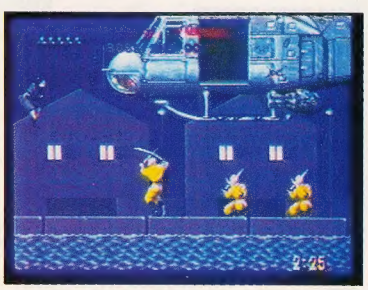

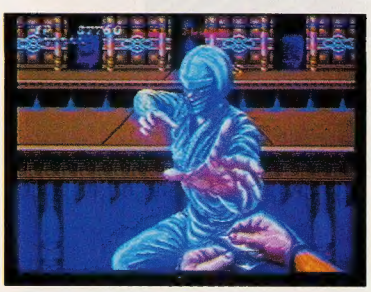

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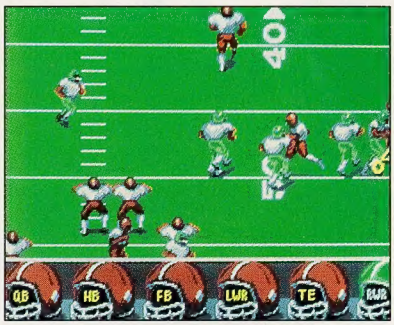

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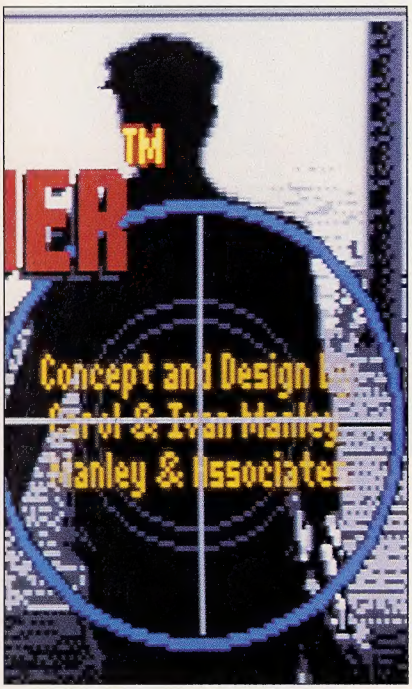

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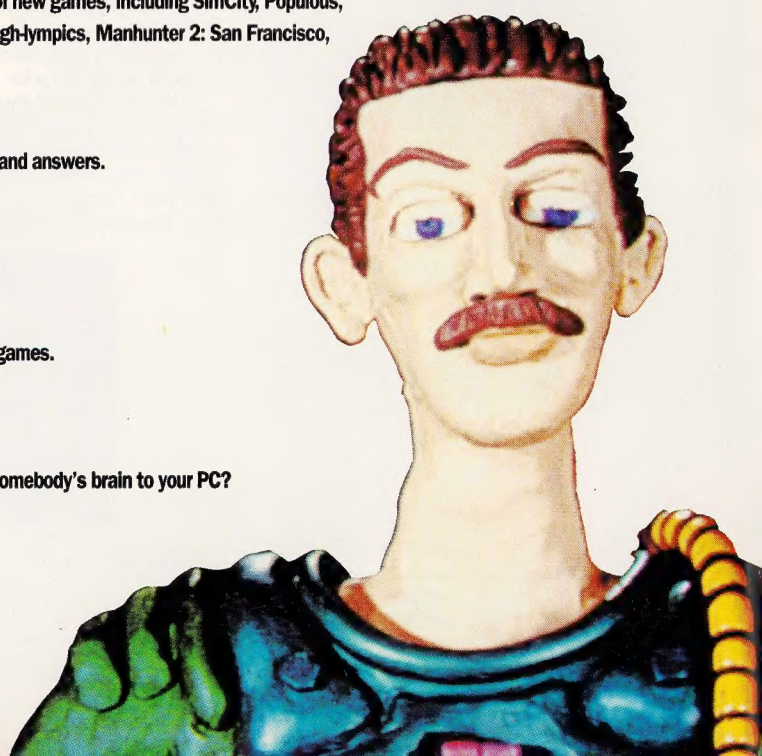

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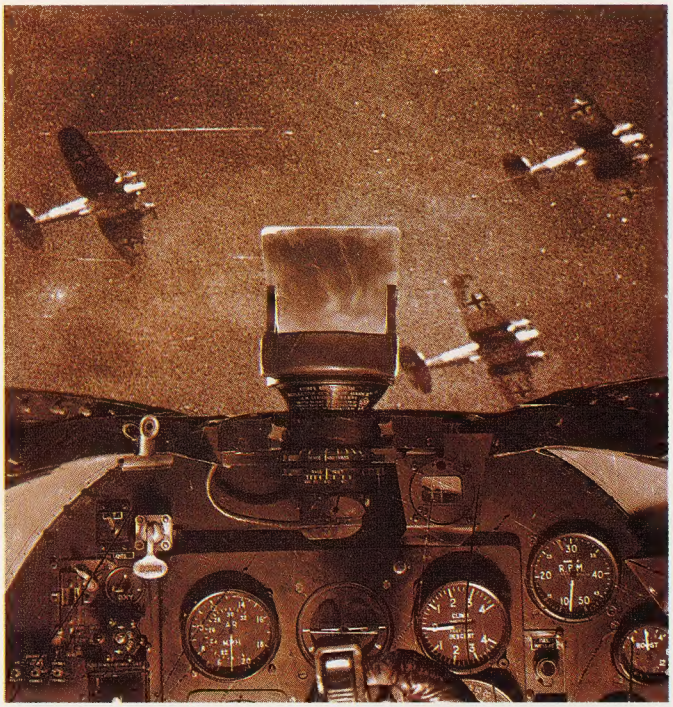

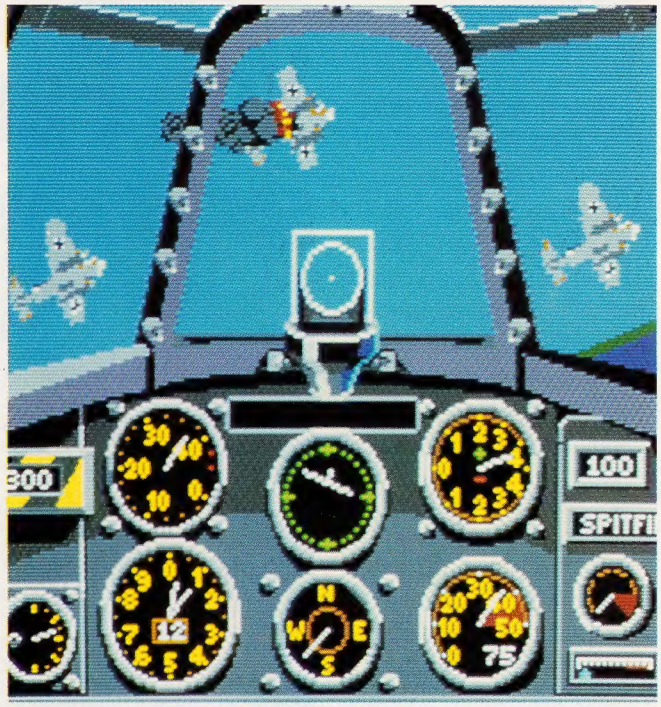

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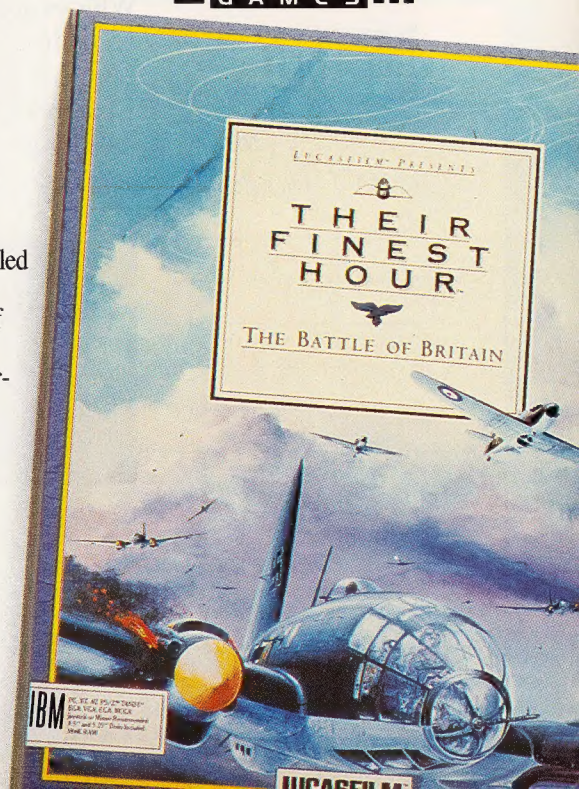

IBM screens shown. Available for IBM (includes AdLib™ sound card support), Amiga, and Atari ST.

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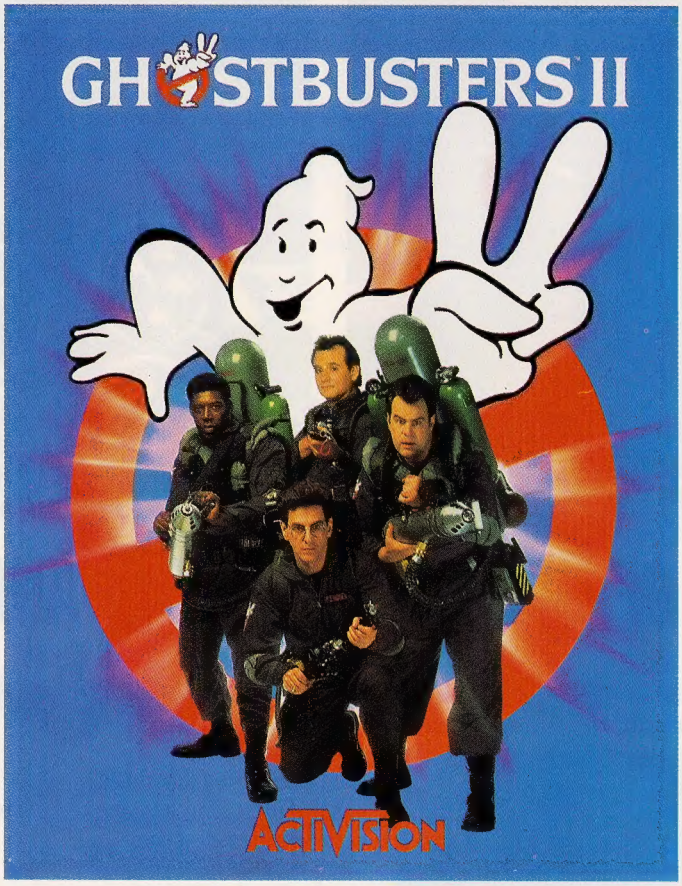

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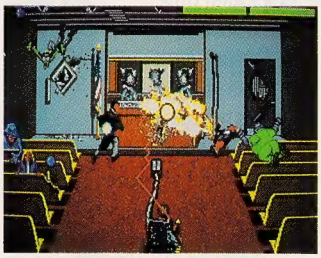

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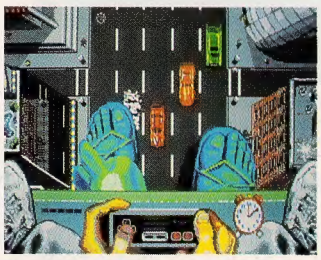

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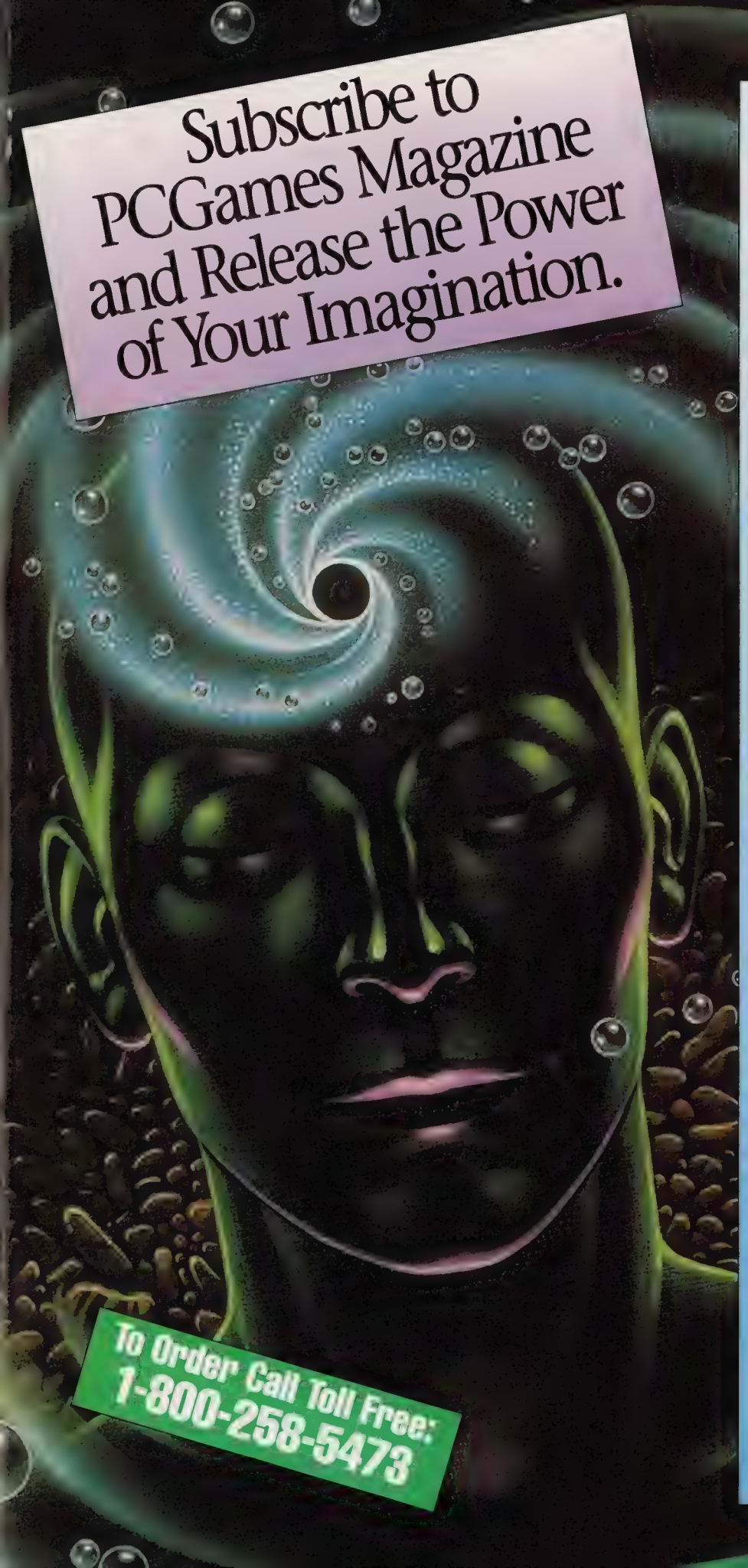

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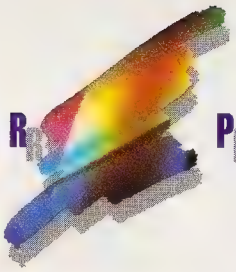

HOW DOES IT RATE?

Ratings systems in reviews are good news/bad news propositions. The good news is that you can read a rating a lot faster than you can read a review. The bad news is.... Well, I'm afraid there's plenty of bad news.

As you can probably already tell, I'm not a big fan of ratings.

It all started years ago when I first began to write product reviews. I had to rate each product according to a grade scale (A was best and F—well you all know what F was for). The point is, as logical as the rating system was, it depended too much on my mood. Let's say I know a program pretty well; I've written the review; and now I'm deciding the ratings. Now let's say I missed breakfast, my stomach is grumbling at me, and my concentration is just a little bit off. The ratings will probably be just a little bit lower than they might otherwise have been. Or suppose I just got a check for $30,000 in the mail (no, that's never happened, but it could!). I can assure you my mood will be expanded and so will the ratings.

But it's subtler than all that. It just varies from day to day, for no apparent reason. I know, because I used to fill in the ratings one day, then do them again the next, and they would be different. Maybe not really different. Just different. The problem is, when you compare one product against another using ratings, even small differences may translate into a decision to buy one over the other.

Here's another example. Once I was a member of a team of reviewers looking at a bunch of similar products. I had more experience with that kind of product than many of the others did, and, consequently, my ratings were a little lower. They were judged on a stiffer yardstick, so to speak. I also know that the products I reviewed were at least as good or better than the others, and I would have given them even lower ratings. But the result was that a really good game got a lower mark than an inferior one.

Despite that, ratings can be effective. One magazine whose ratings I appreciate is InfoWorld. That's because each rating is completely backed up in the review, and each review is divided into segments that support similar ratings divisions. It's a very clear, unarbitrary system.

Should we try to institute such a ratings system here at PCGames? There are some trade-offs. For instance, our writers are creative in their approaches to each game. Too fixed a format might affect the entertaining styles that many of them adopt. Also, games are more subjective than, say, databases or spreadsheets. I'm in favor of a very simple ratings system–one that shows quickly whether we liked a game or not, but won't be used as a guide to which game is better than the other.

What do you think? Do you want ratings, warts and all, or are you satisfied with good reviews? Let us know After all, PCGames is a magazine for you, and we'll try to do what you ask of us.

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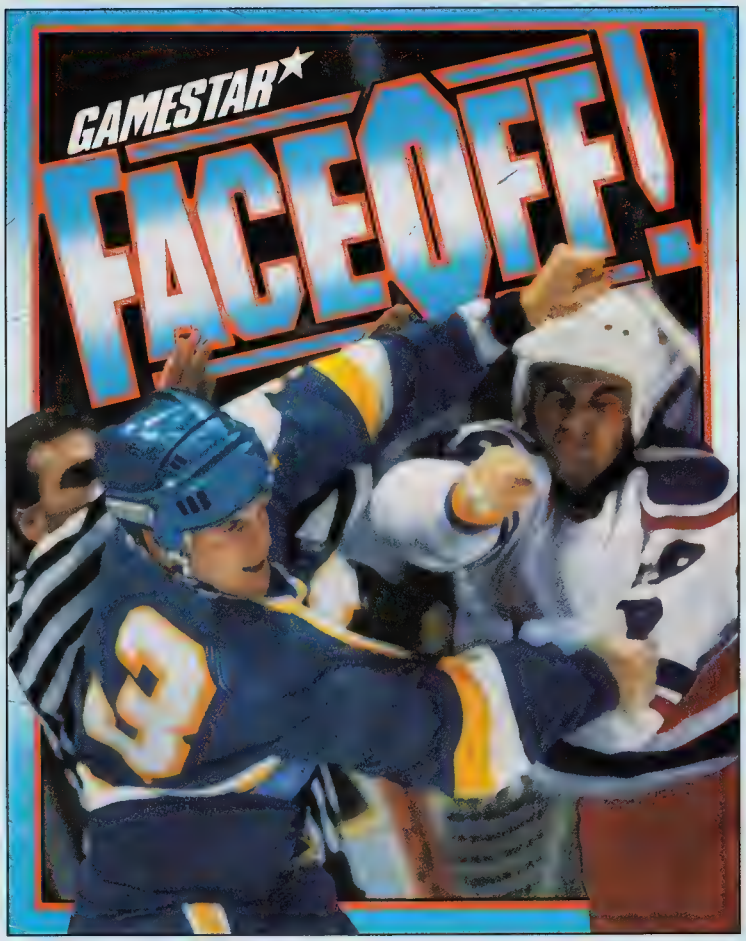
"I Went to the Fights and a Hockey Game Broke Out."



Hockey is war on ice. Players travel over 30 miles an hour, the puck over 100. *FaceOff!* captures the beauty and brutality of hockey. When you see it, you'll understand why GAMESTAR—the leading sports software publisher—waited to do it right.

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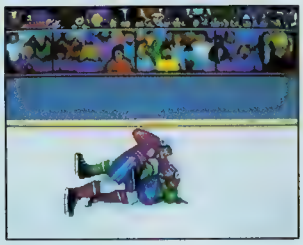
When the goon squad hits the ice, yank your hotshots before they're ice-spots.



Don't Get Mad, Get Even!
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GAME OF THE YEAR NOMINATIONS

This is your chance to tell us what you think. We've listed some of our favorite games from 1989. They're in alphabetical order, five or more titles in each category. Rank the games or write in your own picks. At the same time, you automatically enter our drawing. Twenty lucky winners will get to pick a free game from our list.

Instructions: Write in a number from 1 to 5 for each entry, or use the Other category to write in your own favorite title:

Arcade

- ❑ Arkanoid II: The Revenge of Doh
- ❑ Baal
- ❑ Beyond the Black Hole
- ❑ Caveman Ugh-Lympics
- ❑ Fiendish Freddy's Big Top O' Fun
- ❑ Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (action game)
- ❑ Licence to Kill
- ❑ Silpheed
- ❑ Targhan
- ❑ Road Runner
- ❑ Other _____

Adventure

- ❑ David Wolf: Secret Agent
- ❑ Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade
- ❑ King's Quest IV
- ❑ Mean Streets
- ❑ Space Quest III
- ❑ Other _____

Fantasy

- ❑ Bard's Tale II: The Destiny Knight
- ❑ Curse of the Azure Bonds
- ❑ Hero's Quest
- ❑ Journey
- ❑ Magic Candle
- ❑ Might and Magic II
- ❑ Prophecy
- ❑ War in Middle Earth
- ❑ WindWalker
- ❑ Other _____

Fighting

- ❑ Bad Dudes
- ❑ Budokan
- ❑ Double Dragon
- ❑ Operation Wolf
- ❑ WindWalker
- ❑ Other _____

Simulation

- ❑ Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer 2.0
- ❑ F19 Stealth Fighter
- ❑ Jet Fighter: The Adventure
- ❑ M1 Tank Platoon
- ❑ Omni Play Horse Racing
- ❑ SimCity
- ❑ 688 Attack Sub
- ❑ Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain
- ❑ Tracon
- ❑ Other _____

Strategy

- ❑ Balance of Power: 1990 Edition
- ❑ Hidden Agenda
- ❑ Populous
- ❑ SimCity
- ❑ Pipe Dream
- ❑ Tetris
- ❑ Other _____

Sports

- ❑ ABC Monday Night Football
- ❑ Earl Weaver Baseball
- ❑ Hardball II
- ❑ Jack Nicklaus Golf
- ❑ John Madden Football
- ❑ Kings of the Beach
- ❑ Lakers Vs. Celtics in the NBA Playoffs
- ❑ TV Sports Football
- ❑ Wayne Gretzky Hockey
- ❑ Other _____

Special Game Design Awards

- ❑ Gin King/Cribbage King
- ❑ Hole-in-One Miniature Golf
- ❑ Mean Streets
- ❑ Omega
- ❑ Omni Play Horse Racing
- ❑ Populous
- ❑ SimCity
- ❑ Targhan
- ❑ SimCity
- ❑ Vette!
- ❑ Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego
- ❑ Other _____

Game of the Year

- ❑ Space Quest III
- ❑ Omni Play Horse Racing
- ❑ SimCity
- ❑ Populous
- ❑ Wayne Gretzky Hockey
- ❑ Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (adventure game)
- ❑ Their Finest Hour: Battle of Britain
- ❑ Other _____

Contributing Nominators: Adam Sherwin, Ed Dille, Rick Teverbaugh, James Trunzo, Wes Nihei, Rusel DeMaria

Fill in if you want to enter the free drawing:

Name _____

Street _____

City/Zip _____

Phone _____

Send your votes to:
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San Mateo, CA 94402

All entries must be received by March 10, 1990.

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A dead woman...
A deserted house...
A missing husband...

It's the hottest story in London and you've just been scooped! Your editor is furious and your rivals at the Morning Star are gloating. Save your paper - and your job - by solving the murder and scooping the Star!

The Scoop is big...over 80 locations in and around London. But it's not too big to play. The obvious-to-use menus let you question suspects, eavesdrop on conversations, search rooms, gather evidence, and do it all rapidly and easily, with no cumbersome typing of words or sentences. You'll meet over 30 animated characters, who move around London on their own, react to what you do and say, even lie and conceal evidence. And remember... one of them has killed once and could kill again to get rid of a troublesome reporter!

I really can't speak with you now. I'm quite distraught over the death of my dear Geraldine. This is all too much for me. Perhaps you could come to my shop on North Street tomorrow afternoon.
What's on your mind?
Tell me about...
Where were you...
Show
Exit

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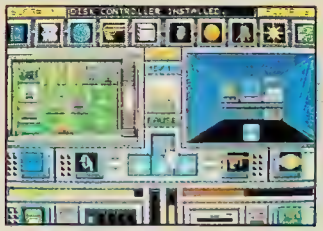
Accolade

Accolade has announced two new action strategy games with space themes. The first, developed by Paul Reiche, has the working title *StarCon*–a space combat game with strategy elements. Fight against alien races in a struggle for control of a solar system. It's out in early 1990. In *Day of the Viper*, the task is to take back control of a critical defense installation that has been seized by a hostile android and its robot army. You'll guide the Viper-Five, an "infiltration droid" that goes where humans dare not tread. But watch out. The robots are killers and as many as four at a time may attack. And everything happens in real time, not turn-by-turn, so you have to think fast. The game also features a built-in note taker and auto mapping as well as an intelligent object management system that keeps track of every object you encounter, even if you drop it somewhere. Clicking on anything logs its identity and location. Add that information automatically to your notes if you want.

Accolade is also releasing two new simulations: *Gunboat* from Tom Loughry features a first person view from a patrol boat going down enemy rivers (like those found in parts of Vietnam). Take branches and tributaries, establish control of river sections, and participate in several missions. *Air Combat Simulator* takes you to the Curtis E. LeMay wargames that take place yearly at



Day of the Viper.

Elsworth AFB in South Dakota. Participate in wargames in a simulation of this event. Fly several different scenarios and choose from a wide variety of aircraft and weaponry. According to an Accolade spokesperson, this game will feature a greater variety of aircraft than any other flight simulator. See if you can be the outstanding participant in the games.

Looking farther ahead, Accolade has licensed the popular board game, *StrateGO*. Expect to see a computer version later this year. Finally look for a graphic action/adventure in which you control a person seeking fame and fortune in the modern world.

The Manhole.

Activision and Mediagenic Distribution

Just for clarification, Mediagenic is a publishing company that currently publishes and distributes products for several other companies, including Activision Entertainment (one of the original computer entertainment companies), Dynamix, Infocom, and Gamestar. There has been some confusion among our readers about the relationship between Activision and Mediagenic. Hope that helps.

Meanwhile, Mediagenic has decided to divest their productivity software divisions TENpointO and Activision Presentation Tools. This announcement affects products like Paintworks Gold, Draw Plus, Focal Point, and Reports among others. These products will continue to be sold, but will not be upgraded in the future. According to Mediagenic's CEO, Bruce L. Davis, the affected divisions contributed only about eight percent of the company's 1989 revenues. Mediagenic intends to concentrate its efforts on game development and distribution.

Recently, I was invited to Mediagenic's headquarters for a preview of their new Gametalk development language. This internally developed language will allow developers for

WIZARDRY·V
HEART OF THE MAELSTROM

LOSE YOURSELF IN A NEW GENERATION OF WIZARDRY!

The Legacy Continues ...

Despite the greatest magic of the ancient High Sages, great floods, earthquakes and famine again pervade the land of Llylgamyn. The great Orb of L'Kbreth, an artifact of remarkable power that has protected the city for generations, is powerless to halt the scourge.

But now, the Sages have discovered that the hidden reason is deeper and more frightening than the worst of these disasters. To save the very world as we know it, you, and your intrepid party must rush headlong into the ...

Heart of the Maelstrom

Heart of the Maelstrom is a complete revision of the Wizardry Gaming System, with more story and game depth than ever before. You may create your own party of adventurers, or use characters from other Wizardry scenarios. In this new world of Wizardry, you will find:

New Mazes

More than twice the size of previous scenarios, with larger monster pictures, magical pools, buried treasure, locked doors and much, much more.

New Abilities

Thief and Ninja characters that can hide, then ambush unsuspecting monsters. Spellcasters can conjure monsters to fight for your party.

New Spells

Over 40 brand new spells, 60 in all. A unique and totally new magic system.

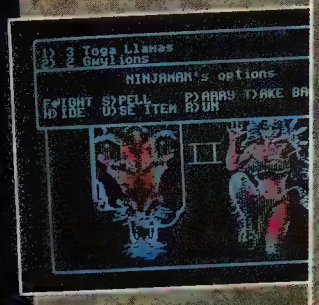
New Combat System

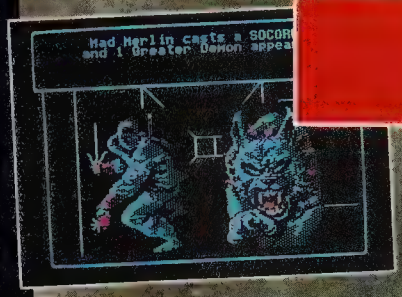
Diabolical monsters with more deadly abilities than ever before, and an arsenal of ranged weapons and new combat situations will test your strategic powers as well as your strength.

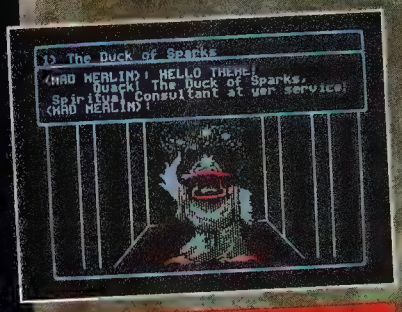
New Monster Encounters

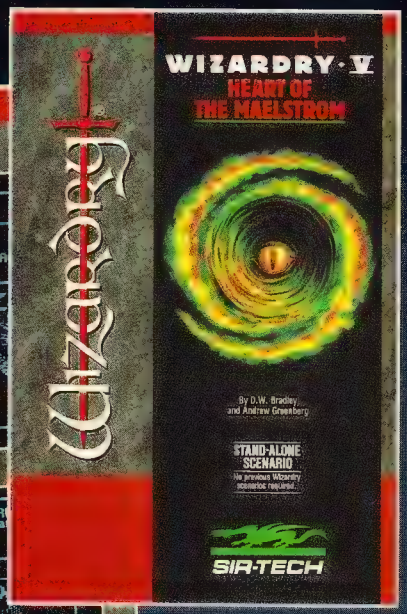
Converse, buy, sell, trade, steal, or stand and fight in a dungeon filled with real characters.

For the most exciting experience available in fantasy role-playing, enter Heart of the Maelstrom!









Now available for:

- Apple II Series (5¼ inch only)
- MS-DOS machines (3½ inch and 5¼ inch)

Screens from Apple II version of the game. Screens for other systems may vary.

STAND-ALONE SCENARIO

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Wizardry

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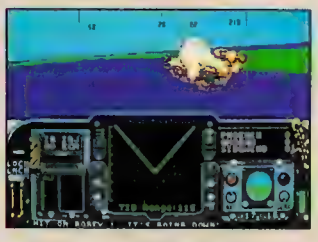
Mediagenic's companies to develop some very sophisticated titles. Many companies use proprietary development systems, but, according to the developers at Mediagenic, Gametalk is a state-of-the-art system. Among its unique features are the ability to compress 256-color images up to four times with cinematic effects like fades and wipes built into the language; highly compressed high-quality audio; an object oriented language that allows for extensions and outside functions; background processing; development for multiple platforms using the same code; and much more. The first game to use the Gametalk development system is *The Manhole* for the PC. However, several new (and secret) products are currently in development.

New product announcements for **Activision** include *F-14 Tomcat*, a realistic flight simulator that takes you through the U.S. Naval Fighter Weapons School. Once you graduate, you take to the sky in more than 80 missions. Also coming, *PowerDrift*, an adaptation of the popular coin-op driving game. Currently shipping are *Die Hard*, *MechWarrior*, and *Death Track*.



F-14 Tomcat.

Dynamix is working on a follow up to *A10 Tank Killer*–called *Red Baron*, it's a World War I dogfight game. Fly such vintage aircraft as the Fokker triplanes and others of the era. The storyline runs through the war, and if you're successful, you have a shot at the Red Baron, himself. Red Baron will feature improvements on the technology used in A10 Tank Killer, artificial intelligence in the dogfights, VGA graphics, and changing equipment and competition as the war progresses. *Blade Hunter: Dragon* begins a new series like the David Wolf series, but features a more interactive story and less 3D simulation. In this story, you'll play a detective responsible for exploring an entire city. The interface will be totally point and click, with no keyboard commands. Animated sequences, multiple plotlines with branches at every point, and digitized hand graphics are all parts of the game. Look for Blade Hunter: Dragon in early summer.

Infocom is planning some major announcements at this year's Winter CES. They plan to revolutionize the story-telling genre with new and creative approaches. Look for some really surrealistic science fiction titles, technologically very different from the traditional Infocom software. That's all we can tell you so far, except that they're using Gametalk for one of the new titles. We'll have more about the announcements in our next issue.

Street Rod.

Britannica Software

Britannica has released *Archipelagos*, an intriguing game that lets you try to clean up a polluted environment. Though this is a game with a message, the graphics and the action are fun and there's an element of strategy, too. *Jigsaw* lets you take PC Paintbrush or Deluxe Paint pictures of your own, scramble them, and then put them back together against the clock. Or try the pictures that come with the program. New and upcoming products include *Eye of Horus*, an action adventure with an Egyptian theme and graphics; and *Revolution '76*, a simulation of the American Revolution.

Broderbund

Broderbund is about to release *Wolf Pack*, a high-res naval conflict simulation. Also, new products include a PC version of *Shufflepuck Cafe*, *Sky Chase* (developed by Maxis), and upgrades for *Carmen World* and *Carmen USA* to EGA and MCGA formats. Finally, they've announced *Wings of Fury*, an animated action WWII flying game.

Maxis is coming out with a new program, working title *Moonwars*. Bioform an asteroid while maintaining control as an enemy tries to take over in this strategy game. As we mentioned in the previous issue, Maxis' new world simulator, *Gaia*, is already in development.

FOUR COMPUTER HACKERS ARE ABOUT TO RAID YOUR DISK DRIVE.

Difficulty level = 1
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
Difficulty level = 0
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
Difficulty level = 0
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
Difficulty level = 1
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

No computer will go unscathed, as Ultra's version of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles® storms into your disk drive to duke it out with Shredder™– a maniac more menacing than an army of mind-altered Bruce Lees.

But if they're to survive, you must command the role of each turtle, rumbling through a maze of Mouser™ infested sewers, criminally polluted rivers and alleys patrolled by the fanatical Foot Clan.™

Along the way, search for bonus weapons like the Triple Shuriken. You'll have to also think fast, switching turtle identities in order to match their karate skills with those of the enemy.

So grab your joystick and nunchukus, then control every leap, chop, slice and dice, until you splatter Shredder senseless or get yourself hacked into turtle soup.

Now featuring the ULTRA® "GAME SAVE" command.

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Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles is available for IBM, Commodore and Amiga.

Circle 8 on Reader Service card.

California Dreams

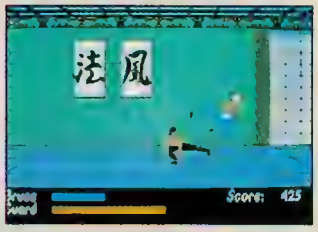
California Dreams has released *Street Rod*, their 1950's hot rod role playing/action game, and *Tunnels of Armageddon*, a mind-bending action game with eye-catching graphics.

Capstone

Capstone has released *Superman: The Man of Steel*, so clean the Kryptonite out of your closets and join Superman, Clark Kent, Lois Lane, and, yes, Lex Luthor, in an action adventure. Use your strength and super powers to save the day.

Data East

Data East has finally released two of their big products: *RoboCop* and *Batman*. RoboCop is a challenging action game with plenty of firepower. Batman is an adventure game in which you guide the Caped



Bruce Lee.

Crusader through a maze-like city trying to thwart the evil plans of the Penguin in one adventure, then taking on the Joker in another. Keep Batman alive by finding food along the way, while searching for the objects you need to solve the mystery.

To follow up on their *Monday Night Football* title (see elsewhere in this issue), Data East's Season Ticket line is readying *Bo Jackson Baseball*. Though we have little information about the game, the preliminary graphics look fantastic with pitcher and batters screens featuring finely drawn, extra large players.

Data East is planning to launch a fantasy role playing line soon, though we have little information about the first titles they will release. All we know is that there are several more exciting projects coming from Data East over the next few months.

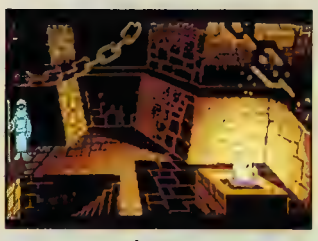
Digitek

While we eagerly await the release of *Dino Wars* (they've decided to make it bigger with more game boards!), Digitek is working on another mega-release–*Rings of Medusa*. The object is to find the five rings of the Medusa in ancient Greece. This huge game lets you zoom to any part of Greece (viewing the whole map); go into castles, bars, and several different cities. Explore the Greek islands; they estimate it could take up to three or four months to complete the game. And each time you start the game again, it sets up differently.

Electronic Arts and Affiliated Labels

EA has recently announced the addition of two new affiliates; **UBI Soft** and **Sega of America**. *Pro Tennis Tour* should be shipping from UBI Soft and *Iron Lord* is expected any time now. Four hit Sega titles are also scheduled: *Altered Beast, Golden Axe, Turbo OutRun*, and *Crackdown*.

Cinemaware is shipping *TV Sports Football, The Krystal*, and *Death Bringer*. The long awaited *Lords of the Rising Sun* should be coming soon as well as *TV Sports Basketball*, and also *TV Sports Baseball*. Finally, *It Came from the Desert* is on the way. Look out!



Loom.

Lucasfilm is finally shipping *Loom* for the PC. This game's unique plot and interface make it one of the most fascinating games of the year.

New World Computing is releasing *Tunnels and Trolls* (based on the Tunnels and Trolls RPG adventure series) in conjunction with a Japanese company sometime in the first half of the year. (Might and Magic II was co-developed with the Japanese, too.) For Tunnels and Trolls, New World wrote the story and plot, and designed the game; it was then programmed in Japan.

Miles Computing has released *Fool's Errand* and *Living Jigsaws*. Look for future releases of *Harrier Strike, Keys to Marmonte*, and *Puzzle Gallery* for the PC.

Software Toolworks is working hard on some games, but they're not ready to tell us anything. However, their *Bruce Lee Lives* title should be available now.

As usual, **SSI** continues to produce quality games in their war simulation and fantasy lines. Recent releases include *Sword of Aragon, Dungeon Master's Assistant II*, and *Dragons of Flame*. Also, a PC version of *Battles of Napoleon* should be available by now. Coming soon, another fantasy title in the Dungeons and Dragons series, *Champions of Krynn*. Also, those of you who are stuck somewhere in the *Curse of the Azure Bonds* will be happy to know that a *cluebook* is now available.

The Much Better Late than Never Department– A Special Preview

Three-Sixty Pacific is finally ready to release *Harpoon*. In fact, it should be in your favorite store now. We had a chance to preview the game, and it looks like it was worth the wait. Harpoon features a smooth interface–very hypermedia and Mac-like with pull-down menus, dialog box input, and multiple windows.

Harpoon.

CRIME Wave

ACTUAL
256 COLOR
VGA SCREENS

Real Sound™

A powerful crime syndicate has taken over large areas of our major cities turning them into vast criminal wastelands.

Arson, extortion, drug distribution, murder and now...terrorist abduction! You have just learned that they have taken the U.S. President's daughter and are holding her and our country hostage.

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Spots from Spot.

The initial scenario that comes with Harpoon is set in the GUIK Gap. In the scenario are 12 increasingly difficult missions. Additional scenarios will be available from Three-Sixty Pacific, the first within 30 days of the product's release. However, the first scenario should keep players busy for a while.

The main strategy screen shows three map windows. The first contains an overview of the area. Moving a rectangle over that window changes the focus of the second window–the Group window. Here, you can identify different groups of ships, planes, and other landmarks on the map. The third map shows close-up details of the selected group from the group map, including individual ships, planes, and even missiles and torpedoes en route.

Clicking on anything in Harpoon will display information about it. For instance, clicking on a ship shows its name and class, heading and speed, and possibly other information. Each ship, aircraft, and weapon has a very detailed information screen associated with it, and there are 125 of them. So this program is a wealth of information about military hardware. Each screen shows a digitized image of the ship or weapon. There are also special screens showing individual information about each weapon on a ship or aircraft as well as kinds of radar and sonar and their ranges. All the information contained in these screens is both graphic and complete.

Harpoon is full of options, including different levels of help. Your 'assistant' can provide you with lots of information and help if you need it, or none at all if you are an expert player. Or you can set the help to somewhere in between.

Use time compression to help you in the fierce battles, or to speed up the 'in-between' times. Plan your deployments well, and be ready to react instantly. When you get into one of the advanced scenarios, you'll have to think very fast and plan very well. You'll see every missile or torpedo launch, and every explosion as they hit.

Harpoon's interface was painstakingly designed. According to Three-Sixty's Richard Frisina, Harpoon was intended to bring people into military strategy games even if they never thought they would like such titles. Certainly Harpoon was worth the long wait. It should provide hours of challenging entertainment.

Also releasing from Three-Sixty is *Sands of Fire*, a WWII North African tank simulation featuring both arcade action and strategy. Play different campaigns with multiple tanks. Re-create authentic WWII battles. View the action from the commander's seat in a platoon or as the tank pilot.

Konami

Konami's Nintendo hits are beginning to appear on the PC. Look for *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Metal Gear, Castlevania, Double Dribble, Blades of Steel*, and *Super C* for adventure, action, and sports.

Magnetic Images

Better known for their Atari ST titles, Magnetic Images is now producing games for the PC. *Lost Dutchman Mine* is an interesting role-playing graphic adventure that puts you in the shoes of a gold miner in the old west. Future development from Magnetic Images will include PC versions of their games as well.

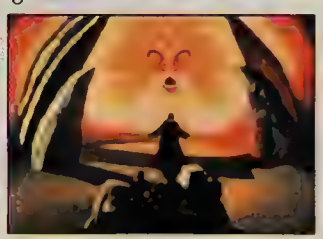
Mastertronic

Mastertronic has taken a British board game called Infection and entirely revamped it. According to Annette Childs of Mastertronic, this game is incredibly addicting, but needed something. So they licensed the Seven-Up Spots (Seven-Up's answer to the California Raisins), added all kinds of graphics and animation, and came up with *Spot*. The game is still addicting, but now it's even more fun. You start with one spot, but when you move it, it multiplies. You can move a square at a time, or jump another player's piece. It sounds like a combination of checkers and go with the addition of the Seven-Up Spots break dancing, pole vaulting, and being generally amusing. Yogi Berra would have loved this game. They tell me you can win right up to the last move. "It ain't over till its over."

Microillusions

Microillusions' Hanna Barbera titles, Johnny Quest, Flintstones, Jetsons, and *Scooby Doo* should all be out by now. Each one features a different approach and type of game. We'll look at them all in future issues.

Additional announcements include: *Space Waste* is an arcade type game that features sophisticated hardware scrolling in a shoot-em-up. Play a futuristic garbage man cleaning up the planet. Then there's *Laser Squad*, a strategy game with some action. Control a team of expert laser users in five scenarios–assassinate villains, rescue people, destroy underground storage facilities, and so forth. Play against the computer or another player in this strategy contest.



Star Trek V.

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MicroProse

MicroProse has a busy schedule for the next few months. Along with their announced titles like *X-Men* and *Sword of the Samurai, Rick Dangerous, Weird Dreams, Stunt Track Racer*, and *Xenophobe*; they are going to release several additional games. Some aren't

Living Jigsaws.

announced yet, but we know they're in the works. Among the games we know about are *RVF Honda, 3-D Pool, Punisher,* and *Mega Traveler.* There's also an unnamed game that will put you in a war room simulation (a game with some similarities to Risk). That's all we know for now, but we're prepared for more surprises in the months to come.

Mindscape

Mindscape has recently released several new titles, including *Star Trek V, Harley Davidson: The Road to Sturgis, International Team Sports,* and *Clubhouse Sports* (which features six games: billiards, foosball, skeeball, crazy pool, 3D pinball, and shooting gallery). Also, a PC version of *Deja Vu II.* New EGA versions of *Deja Vu, Uninvited,* and *Shadowgate* have also been released. Look for Chris Crawford's *Guns and Butter* early this year.

Origin

Origin is announcing two new products. The first is *Ultima VI* (celebrating the 10th anniversary of the original Ultima). The second title is called *Bad Blood* and we don't know any more about it–yet.

Psygnosis

Psygnosis has some new treats in store. *Ballistix* is a science fiction sports title that features plenty of twists. It's similar to Speedball, but with a character of its own. *Never Mind* is actually the name of a software product. It features 300 levels of puzzles. You need to reconstruct a video wall image, racing against the clock and against other obstacles like rogue chess pieces. It's hard to describe, but we'll do our best when we see it later in the year. Also, later in the year, look out for *Gore.* It's coming. We don't know much about it, but it sounds like something Freddy Kruger would love.

Sierra

If you're looking for something new from Sierra OnLine, you won't have to look very far. Since our last issue Sierra has released *Conquest of Camelot, Codename: Iceman, Colonel's Bequest, Hero's Quest,* and *Leisure Suit Larry III.* Also look for *Sorcerian,* a fantasy role playing game from Japan.

Spectrum Holobyte

TANK should be shipping by now; it just missed being included in Ed Dille's fine article about tank simulators. TANK features control of up to 16 tanks, head to head operation by modem, three theatres of action (Fort Knox, Central Europe, or the Middle East), 15 different missions, and several different viewpoints (reconnaissance, out of tank, and four different crew perspectives). There's even an easy to learn arcade/action mode. The map features rolling terrain using 3D modeling and a topological battle map with 16 zoom levels. TANK is full of authentic weapons and real-time action (including a night mode with thermal imaging) The large battlefield area features three separate maps with more than 600,000 acres each. The game even comes with a CompuServe intro pak. In addition, you can preset a course for one or more tanks. With the addition of this powerful tank simlulator to the market, game players will have plenty to choose from. For more informaton about tank simulators, see Ed. Dille's article in this issue.

Also coming from Spectrum Holobyte: *Flight of the Intruder* based on the popular book of the same title, and a driving simulation with a working title, *Stunt Driver.* I guess that about speaks for itself.

Spinakker

Star Tribes: Myth of the Dragon Lord should be hitting the streets any time now. As we told you in our last issue, Star Tribes features innovative graphics in an exciting role playing game. Using 3-D modeling software, digitized images, and claymation techniques, this game brings to life a weird assortment of alien life. There are more than 150 characters in 500 different locations.

In the spring, Spinakker plans to release *Riders of Rohan,* an epic action/adventure based on the events depicted in The Two Towers (the second of the Lord of the Rings trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien). This game will feature animated battles and strategic decision making. You can play many of the heros of the

Star Tribes.

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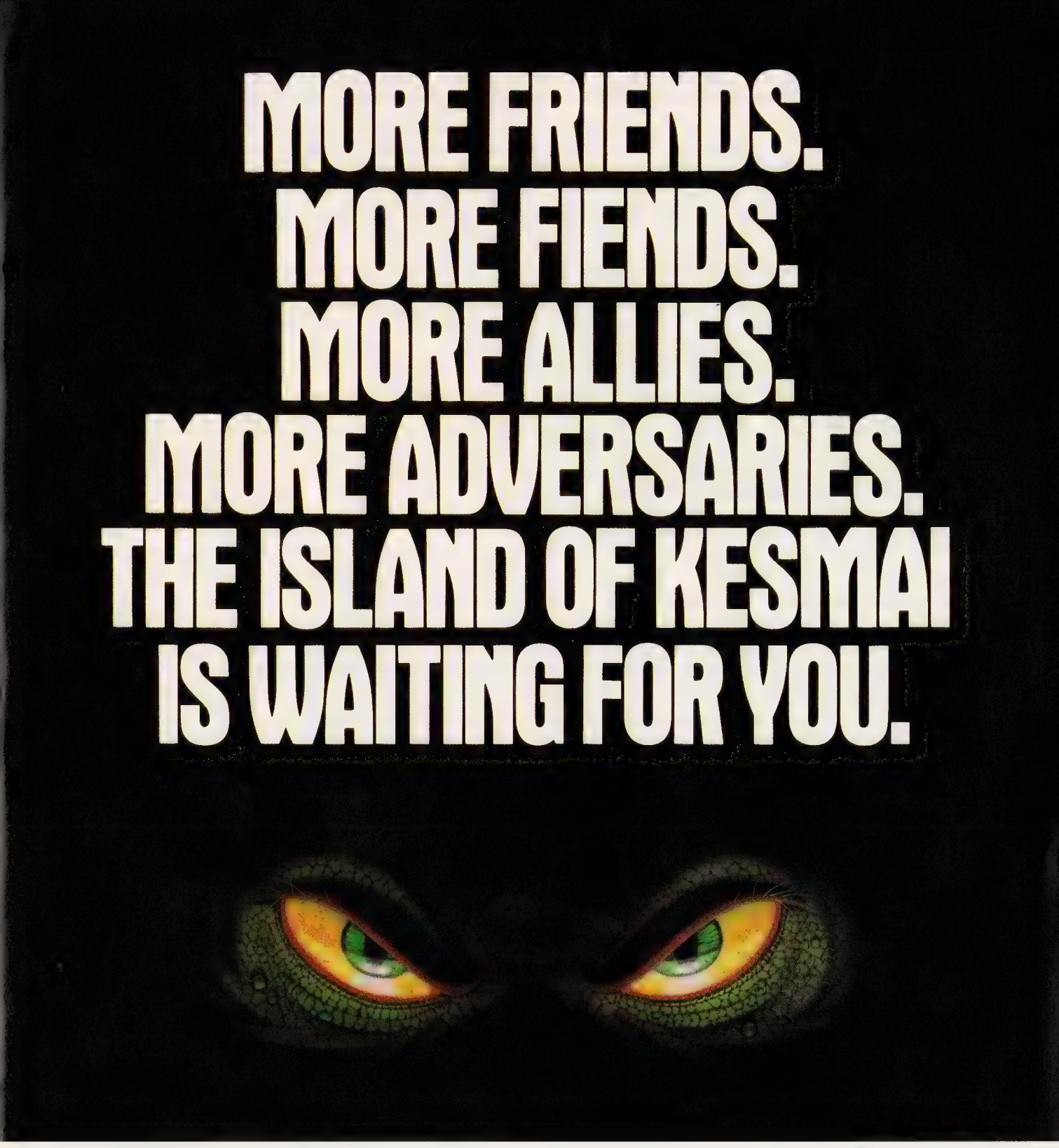

Finally, a role-playing game big enough for your imagination. The Island of Kesmai™ Up to 100 people can play at once, battling their way through 62,000 hexes of scalding deserts, towering cliff-top cities, clammy underground catacombs, and 3,250 truly disgusting computer-generated creatures.

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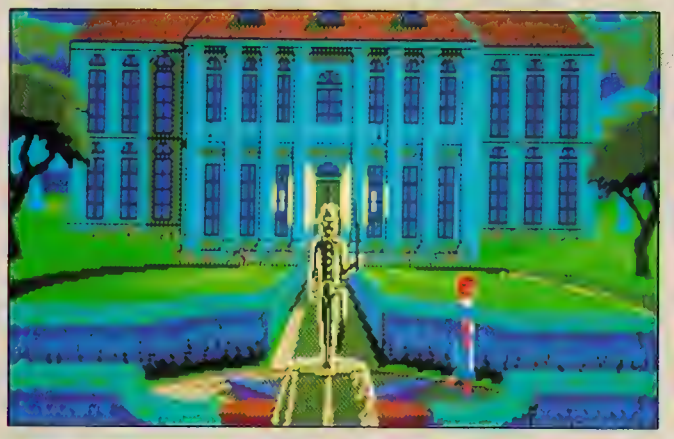
CompuServe®

Trilogy–Aragorn, Gimli, Legolas, or Eomer.

If intergalactic space or Tolkien aren't enough, try *NATO Air Commander* in a simulation of a modern war in Europe. This real-time game puts you in command of the NATO forces. One unique element of this game is that it runs under Microsoft Windows and includes a runtime version. NATO Air Commander should be available very soon.



Colonel's Bequest.

Sporttime

Following their very successful Horse Racing title, Sporttime is bringing their *Basketball* game to the PC. Sporttime offers a unique approach to PC gaming. Each title they produce will have additional modules available for it. For instance, the Basketball game will also have optional college league and sideview action modules available soon after release of the original product.

SubLOGIC

SubLOGIC has plenty to show. They've already released *UFO*, something really different in a flight simulator. Using anti-gravity propulsion, tractor beams, and special anti-detection equipment, it gives you the thrill of exploring the world of humans in a unique way. Use any of SubLOGIC's scenery disks, including their new *Hawaiian Odyssey* scenery disk. Explore the Hawaiian chain with its volcanoes, hidden valleys, and 30 different airports. In addition, you can search for clues to lead you to the goddess Pele's jewel, but don't make a mistake, or you might not return.

Also new from SubLOGIC is a simulator that many people may be curious about. Would you like to know what it's like to fly a Boeing 747 (or 737, 767, or Airbus, for that matter)? Here's your chance. In *Flight Simulator: A.T.P.* (Airline Transport Pilot), you take the controls. You need to take into account your fuel levels and passenger load. Check your weather radar, review your complete instrument panel, and fly between more than 350 U.S. cities, including 25 major airports. New features include partial cloud cover, improved graphics, and working air traffic controller contacts as well as visual sightings of other planes during takeoffs and approaches.

Finally, SubLOGIC has taken the flight controller issue into their own hands. *Flight Controls I* may be the ultimate peripheral for flight simulator fans. Not only does it feature a smooth control yoke that can be handled one-handed, but includes a T-bar throttle and working gear and flap switches as well. Optional rudder pedals complete the set. SubLOGIC is even trying to get FAA approval for this system as a way of logging hours toward establishing and maintaining a private pilot's license. Flight Controls I will work especially well with SubLOGIC's flying products, but it will also work with any other simulation that can use an analog joystick.

Taito

New Zealand Story really sounds like a strange one. It's the newest arcade game from Taito. It features a group of kiwis in Reeboks on a picnic. OK. Then a huge walrus chases them off screen, catches them, and throws them in a bag. Our Hero escapes, then tries to save the others. Follow his adventures through eight worlds, each with four levels. At first he's armed only with arrows, but there are plenty of opportunities awaiting him–and plenty of dangers. He might find bombs, boomerangs, or hijack a flying saucer. He'll meet such enemies as hermit crabs, floating teddy bears, kangaroos, and many more, and he'll have to defeat a boss character at the end of each level. He may even have to don scuba gear to go underwater!

Leaving the kiwis behind for the moment, we move to the world of high speed chases and luxury sports cars. *Chase HQ* is a Miami Vice-type driving game. Find the criminals in their cars, then it's on to the high speed chase. Bump the other car to damage it so they get out, then see if you can arrest the bad guys. Sounds easy, maybe, but there are lots of obstacles including other cars, helicopters, and more.

Operation Thunderbolt is the sequel to the popular Operation Wolf. In this game, you must contend with Middle Eastern terrorists and a hijacked jet. Play as a single combatant, or play two-players simultaneously. The action keeps coming at you in this forward scrolling game.

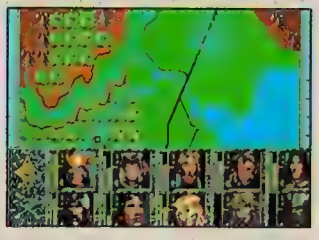
Tengen

Tengen has two new PC titles coming: *Blasteroids* and *Vindicators*. Look for more titles during the year.

Titus

Knight Force is a new sword fighting game. Explore, win battles, find special items, and finally, defeat the evil sorcerer.

Dark Century is a one or two player tank warfare game. Program a team of tanks using an icon-based language, then send the tanks to battle. You can still control the tanks, but if you don't, they'll follow their programming. Dark Century features ray traced tanks for graphic realism.



Dragons of Flame.

Wild Streets is an action beat-em-up game coming soon. Play a lawman with an unusual sidekick–a black panther.

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SPORTS
ACTION!

PCGAMES SPORTS WIRE

Good computer games have action, strategy, and plenty of challenge along with a healthy dose of graphics. And where better to find all these features than in sports? It's no wonder, then, that some of the best and most popular computer games follow the sports theme. At PCGames we've taken a look at the newest crop of sports games,including some of the best football simulations you've ever seen. Along the way, we take a look at several other team sports like basketball, baseball, soccer, and hockey. We've even thrown in a dose of the "sport of kings." Finally, for relaxation, we give you the opportunity to cool out in your local friendly bar for some sports of another kind. So sit back, and enjoy the ride as PCGames looks at some of the newest sports titles on the PC.

John Madden Football

by Wesley Nihei

How many times do you watch your favorite football team on TV and just KNOW that you could call a better game than the coach or pass better than that million-dollar quarterback? You Rams, Jets, and Cowboys fans probably know what I'm talking about. Well, now you can run your own football team under the guidance of one of the winningest coaches in NFL history.

John Madden Football from Electronics Arts (EA) recreates both the on-field grid iron action and the strategic preparation of pro football. You get your X's and O's as well as wrist-snapping, finger-popping arcade action. Madden worked closely with EA's game developers and nuggets of his coaching philosophy spread throughout the game and the manuals make fascinating reading.

Total Control

In Madden's Football, you control all aspects of the game. Call any of 162 offensive and defensive plays–all handpicked by the Coach. The Chalkboard feature enables you to create new plays and the Madden Report rates the individual players position by position. Set up a play, snap the ball, and you control offensive or defensive players.

The program comes with 10 preset teams including teams whose style of play reflects the football philosophies of the 1980's San Francisco Forty-Niners, the '70's Pittsburgh Steelers, and the Oakland (no Bo) Raiders. You also get two interesting all-star lineups: the All-Madden team, based on players coached by Madden, and the All-Timers, Madden's choices for the best in NFL history. Of course, you can build your own teams.

No-nonsense Graphics

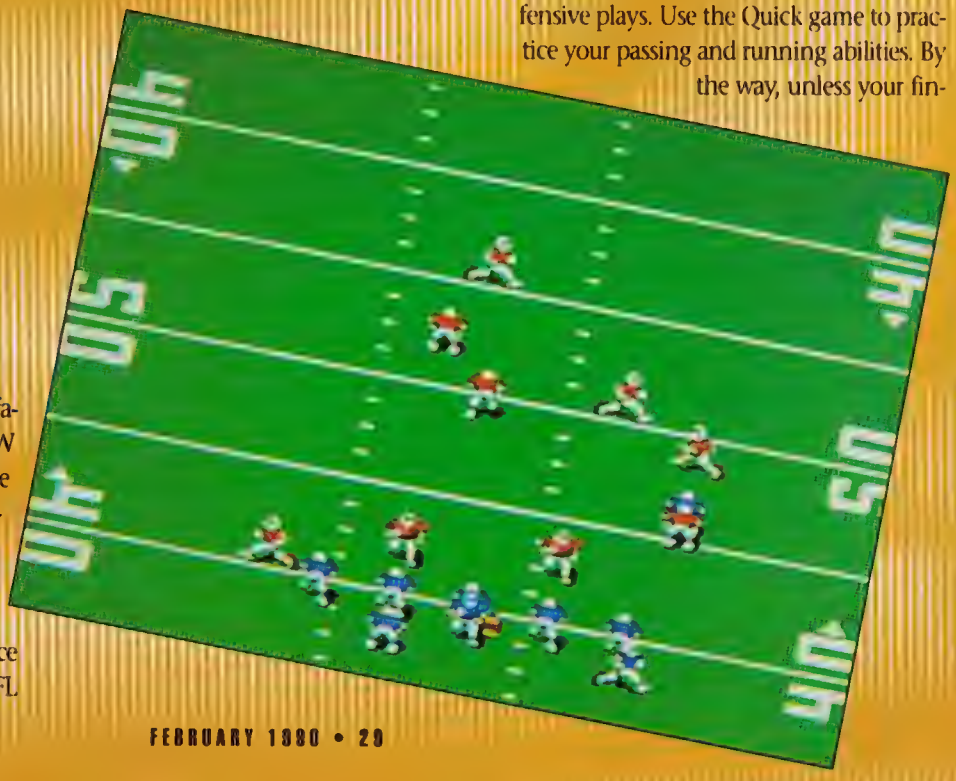
You might say Madden's graphics are basic compared to other games on the market, but then football is a basic sport–you run, block, and pass. You can do all these and more, with enough on-screen action to make you sweat. Madden Football forgoes gratuitous cheerleader scenes, inane crowd shots, or cutesy announcers in favor of straightforward animation.

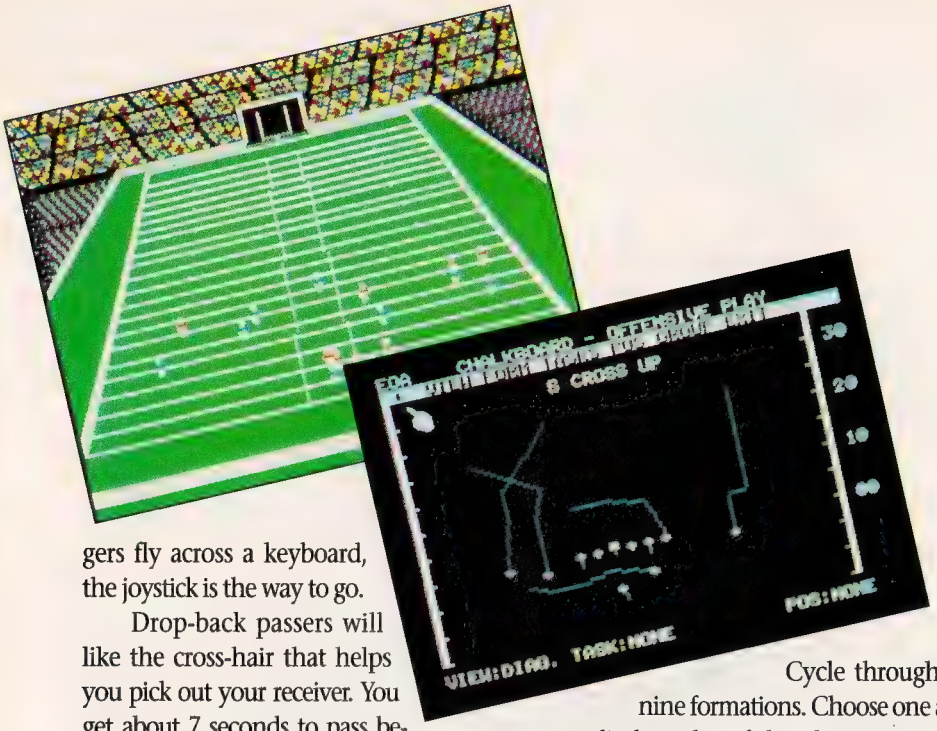
In general, you see all 22 players on-field. However, when a play begins, you get a close-up, overhead view of the offense and the defense. The wide receivers, the cornerbacks, and a safety or two may not be on-screen depending on the formations you use. During pass plays you switch to Stadium view, which is an elevated end zone perspective of the entire field, so you can pick out open receivers downfield. Although the animation and graphics in this game are less spectacular than those in other games, the challenge and excitement of football are well represented.

Name Your Game

Madden's provides two ways to play. Dive right into the action by choosing a Quick game or opt for a Standard game.

The Quick game helps you get familiar with the interface by picking the teams for you and using 18 set offensive and defensive plays. Use the Quick game to practice your passing and running abilities. By the way, unless your fin-





gers fly across a keyboard, the joystick is the way to go.

Drop-back passers will like the cross-hair that helps you pick out your receiver. You get about 7 seconds to pass before you have to scramble or take a sack. Listen for footsteps; defensive linemen zero-in on you. Also, any player who holds the ball–QB, running back, or receiver–can run. Use the joystick to make your cuts and press the joystick button for a quick burst of speed. You'll probably play just a few Quickies before you're ready to move on.

The Standard game cuts to the heart of John Madden Football. Play a rookie or standard game, or play as an All-Pro. Compete with another player or pit your football savvy against the Madd Man himself.

The Huddle Screen, where you call plays, is divided into three sections. The top portion displays scoreboard information such as time, quarter, possession, score, down, and yardage. The rest of the screen is split into a typical chalkboard diagram with the defensive and offensive formations. Instead of typical X's and O's, you see jersey numbers.

You Call the Play

Play-calling is simple, but really gives you a feel for the intricacies of on-field strategy. When the Huddle Screen prompts you for a play, enter a formation number and a play number. Madden's Football contains nine offensive and nine defensive formations with nine plays each. The package includes separate offensive and defensive playbooks, each containing diagrams of 81 Madden-designed plays.

Cycle through all nine formations. Choose one and you display a list of the plays, notated in the appropriate football lingo such as 46 MadTiger or N H38 Toss. If you play with the 30-second clock option, make your choice quickly. Call a play and the formation appears on the playfield. At this point, the defense can audible into an entirely new formation, just change coverages, or shift linebackers into gaps. Now, just snap the ball and go to it.

As you can guess, you'd better learn your playbook before game day. These are not watered down versions, but the real NFL article. For students of the game, this is a rare opportunity to experience the depth and detail of pro football play calling. It's a good idea to switch off the 30-second clock until you learn the plays. When you get good enough to play with the clock, you'll find the keyboard is best for entering plays (cutting down on delay-of-game penalties), while the joystick holds the advantage during on-field action.

Go Long, and I'll Fake It to You

An ongoing argument in locker rooms and bar rooms alike is whether the players make the system or the system makes the players. With John Madden Football, you make both.

The Chalkboard is more than an entertainment feature; it's a sophisticated coaching tool that enables you to edit existing plays or design your own. Pick a play to view its diagram of X's and O's. Just point and click on the player you want to reposition.

You can assign group tasks to offensive linemen to block for runs, passes, and traps. You can also assign tasks to individual players. For example, running backs can run a draw or wide receivers can go in motion. On defense, you guide linebackers to hit the gaps or make cornerbacks play bump and run. To fine tune a play, you can walk through it or practice it full tilt.

The Madden Report

Coach Madden will tell you that key player-vs-player matchups often determine the outcome of a game. The Madden Report enables you to research and exploit those matchups in your favor.

All players on the field are programmed with real-life qualities based on 11 key variables. The Madden report uses a scale from 1 to 9 to rate each of your offensive starters' effectiveness against each defensive player they'll face. Backs and receivers match up against linebackers and DBs. Linemen compare with linemen. Madden's keen eye helps you exploit weaknesses in the other team when you draw up a game plan. Here you can change ratings, rename players, and change their positions. Be careful if you tinker with the roster, it may affect your team's ability to run certain plays successfully.

The End Zone

Other games offer glitzy graphics, but John Madden Football gives computer coaches a real feel for chalkboard strategy and dumps keyboard quarterbacks into the frantic pace of real-time playcalling. Additionally, John Madden's insights into the pro game make this title particularly attractive to students of the game. All that's really missing are more comprehensive control of the kicking game (which is sadly limited), and Madden's knack for arguing with the refs. "You blew the call! You blew that g———— call!"

Electronics Arts' John Madden Football, 256K (EGA/CGA/Tandy, $49.95).

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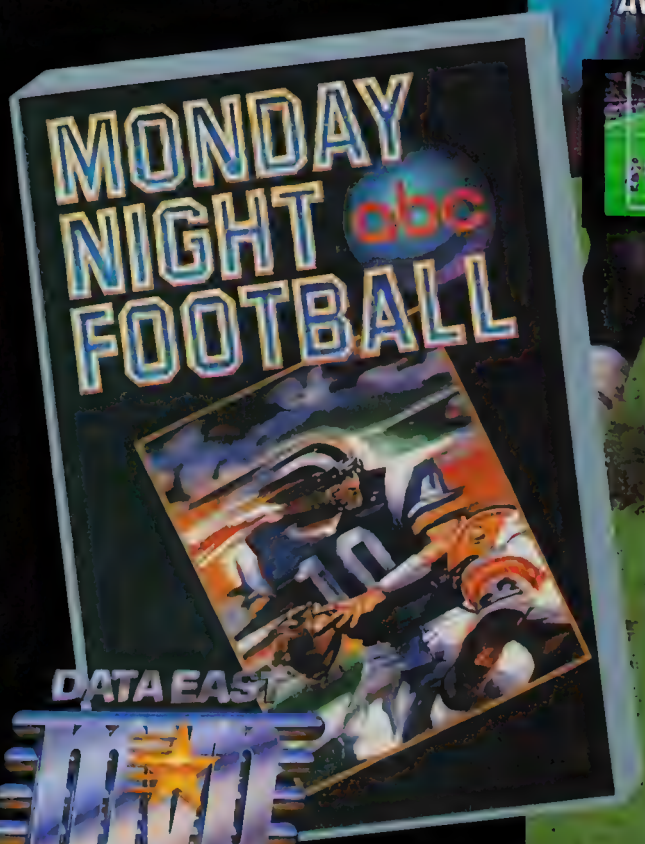

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Monday Night Football

by Rusel DeMaria

It's a tradition. No doubt about it. In 20 years of broadcasting, ABC's Monday Night Football has become one of America's institutions. Now you can participate in your own Monday Night Football–any day or night of the week in Data East's new game.

Monday Night Football may have the best graphics and sound as well as the most innovative user interface of all the football games currently available. On the other hand, it also requires some retooling of the old neural pathways (inotherwords, it has a pretty steep learning curve).

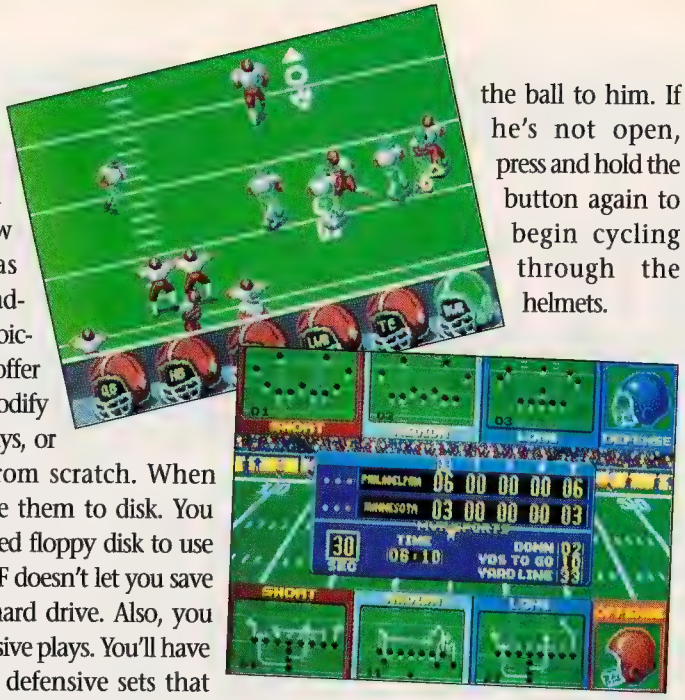
SPFX

Data East has spared no expense for graphics and sounds. The Monday Night Football theme music plays over the title graphics. They've even digitized Frank Gifford's voice and display his likeness at the beginning of the game. For atmosphere, Monday Night Football is tops. The players even comment in simple, but eloquent statements like "Oh, yeah!" and "Awesome!" Or, if they blow a play, they may say "Oh, man.." or "Ah, shoot!" And tackles are accompanied by realistic grunts and groans reminscent of those 'close-up' audios they give us on TV from time to time.

The Custom Game

Before you begin playing, you may decide to modify the skill levels of the players on each team. However, your control is limited. Each player is rated for two categories. For instance, running backs are rated for running ability and ball handling, and only five points are allowed for both abilities. Therefore, you might have a fine runner with an ability level of four, but then he'll have a one for ball handling and is likely to fumble or drop passes.

After setting up your teams, go to the Playmaker Utility and modify existing plays or create your own. In the Playmaker, first select a formation. Now select the player to move; then select his route or assignment. For instance, a wide receiver may run a post, a curl, or one of several other pre-set routes. Though you can't actually draw your own routes as you do in John Madden Football, the choices are realistic and offer plenty of variety. Modify the default set of plays, or create your own from scratch. When you're finished, save them to disk. You must have a formatted floppy disk to use in your A: drive. MNF doesn't let you save playbooks to your hard drive. Also, you can only create offensive plays. You'll have to live with the 12 defensive sets that come with the game.



Now, it's on to the field. Kickoffs are automatic, though the runbacks are not. Before each play, a digitized voice announces the down and position of the ball, and you see the two teams on the field from a side view. Available plays display along the top of the screen (for player one) and bottom (for player two or the computer). Plays display three at a time–one short, one medium, and one long. In all, there are 12 offensive and 12 defensive plays to choose from. Pull back on the stick to see additional sets of three, finally choosing the one you want by pressing the fire button (or keyboard equivalent).

The Play's the Thing

Now, the difficult part begins. Suppose it's a pass play. At the beginning, you see the two teams lined up and about 20 yards of the field. You hike the ball, then drop back. The screen scrolls to keep your active player (the quarterback in this case) in view. While you drop back, you press the fire button, and hold it down. Along the bottom of the screen is a row of helmets, each one representing an eligible receiver or running back. As you hold the button down, each helmet highlights in turn. Once the helmet you want is highlighted, you let go of the button and instantly, your view of the field shifts to show the selected player and the part of the field he is on. If he's open, a quick click of the button passes the ball to him. If he's not open, press and hold the button again to begin cycling through the helmets.

As difficult as this system is to describe, I found it even more difficult to master. It really took time for me to get comfortable. It's very nerve wracking because, once you choose another player view, you no longer see your quarterback. The program places a brief delay on the pass rush whenever you select a player off screen, but that is small comfort. Too often, I clicked the fire button in near panic, throwing a bad pass, or worse, an interception!

Although the learning curve is steep, the graphics in this game are excellent. As hard as it is to get used to, this system lets you see the game from a totally new perspective. It's not really a realistic perspective, and it can be monumentally frustrating at first, but in the end this is a skill game. Like all skill games, you get better as you practice. Knowing where your receivers will be is a big help.

Running plays are a little easier, since you can toss the ball to the runner from the beginning of the play by holding the joystick to the right or left. However, the pursuit can be very fast, so you'll have to hit the holes quickly to gain any yardage.

There's a simple, but effective kicking mode for field goals and extra points, and all in all, this is a pretty effective game of football. With patience and practice, you'll have a chance in Monday Night Football. Once you get the hang of it, it's fun.

Data East's Monday Night Football, 512K (CGA/EGA/Tandy, $49.95).

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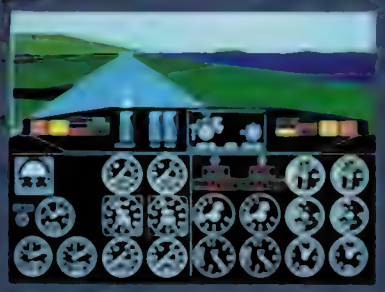

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TV Sports Football

by Rusel DeMaria

Every football game on the PC has its unique strengths and weaknesses. Some have every aspect of the strategic game down pat. Others may let you design the niftiest and most convoluted plays you can imagine. Still others feature unparalleled arcade action.

Cinemaware's TV Sports Football is one of the most satisfying action games of football available. Though just released on the PC, it has been popular on other computer systems for many months.

TV Sports Football, like Monday Night Football (reviewed earlier in this section), has some window dressing around the game—a TV announcer, for instance. However, it isn't quite as glitzy as MNF, and, frankly, in this game I could care less about that part of it anyway. TV Sports Football also doesn't have the playmaking ability of Madden or MNF. It has just twelve offensive plays and a handful of defensive lineups. Still, within these limits, there's plenty of opportunity for action and for strategy.

Having stated what it doesn't have, let me tell you what this game does feature. To begin with, you can choose from any NFL city (though the player names are not authentic, their basic statistics are close). You can also set up league play, so several different gamers can participate in one- or two-player league games. The program keeps won/loss records for each team in the league.

League Time

When playing with league teams, edit your team members according to their speed, strength, hands, and agility. TV Sports Football uses a unique method of assigning values. The most important member of your squad is numbered one and has up to 24 points to assign across the four skill categories. The next most important player is number two and has 23 points, and so on. This method lets you create a Bo Jackson and a Jerry Rice on your team, but not a whole team of them (sorry). However, you can change the players' names, building your favorite teams with their correct names if you wish. One very useful setting allows you to rank your entire offensive or defensive line. For instance, if you want good blocking, rank your offensive line high.

Learn how to run the offense in the Practice mode, then try an exhibition game between any two teams. Play against the computer, against a human, or with a friend against the computer.

Sports in Action

On offense, choose a formation (pro set, shotgun, I-formation, or kick), then choose from one of four plays for each formation. Any play can be a run or a pass, and you can reverse the direction of any play when you call it. So even with only twelve basic plays, there's plenty of variety. For instance, tapping the button to hike the ball automatically makes it a run play and hands off to the back. Tapping the stick back makes the QB follow the designated pass play, and pulling back on the stick gives you control of the QB. Once in the pocket, stop pulling back and aim the QB's hand in the direction of an open receiver, then press and hold the button. An X mark will move out from the QB in the direction he is pointing. Let go of the button when the X reaches the spot you want. It's important to lead a receiver to avoid interceptions.

In this game, run plays really work. If a play is designed to go through the middle, or off-tackle, or around the end, the blocking will open a hole in the appropriate spot (assuming the defense hasn't plugged it up with an unexpected blitz or other maneuver, and your offensive line is up to the challenge). Then it's just a matter of guiding the back through the hole for positive yardage. Look at the defensive set before the hike, then decide whether to run or pass.

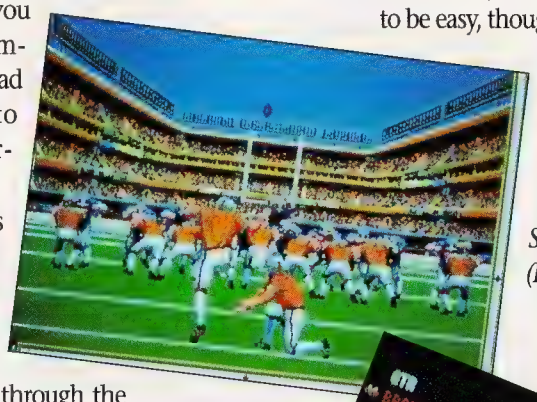
Defense in this game is also full of options. Choose a basic formation (4-3, 3-4, 6-1, or 6-1 keyed to a particular player), then choose inside or outside run defense, pass defense, or blitz. Once on the field, change the linebacker you control. Or assign the linebackers to blitz or to cover man-to-man. As long as you choose before the play begins, you can change your coverage at the last minute.

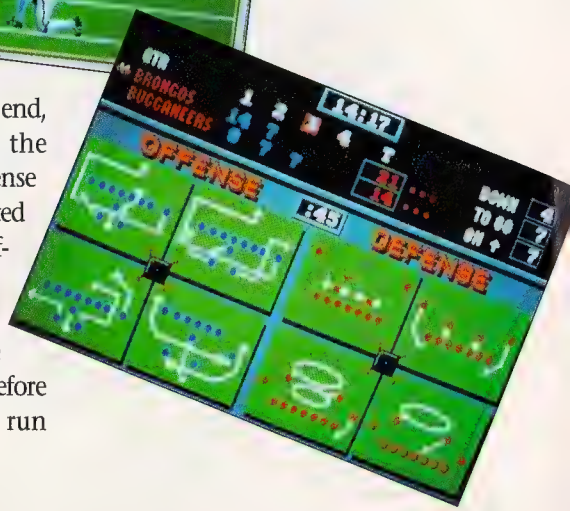
Another nifty feature of this game is that it will play by itself if you don't take control. You can watch the whole game, or just let the computer take over in a particularly difficult spot. In addition, the computer learns your tendencies and, after a while, will tend to call the same plays you do.

In the open field, you can dodge would-be tacklers, though, like everything in this game, your success will be partly determined by the players' statistics. Kick field goals or extra points in a goal post view by selecting where on the ball to kick it.

A complete set of team statistics displays on the screen at the half and at the end of a game, giving you a good way to assess your performance.

In all, TV Sports Football may be the most satisfying game of football for the action fan. The graphics are superior, and the interface is easily mastered. Don't expect it to be easy, though. The computer will play you tough, and another human will play you even tougher.





Cinemaware's TV Sports Football, 512K (EGA/VGA, $49.95)

MOVING PICTURES

So, you take a proven classic, add a new and exciting twist, and what have you got? *Living Jigsaws* – the animated jigsaw puzzle game. Not only is it a successful translation of a traditional game into computer software, it adds an element of surprise that both enhances and improves the original. Imagine picting up jigsaw pieces that change as you try to place them, characters and objects move from one to another as you position them, waterfalls cascade, walls seem to vibrate with color, and a mysterious wizard blows bubbles into an illusory scene. It's an intriguing enhancement, a fascinating premise, and with the quality of artwork this package contains, it is a stunning success.

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MILES Computing

Grave Yardage

Rusel DeMaria

Welcome to the Monster Football League–the MFL. This is Dweebo Numbskull reporting. It looks like a rotten day for a game, and consequently spirits are high. Even King Oozingwound is in attendance. The mine fields are ready and the mud is truly in prime condition. So, ghouls, zombies, elfs, and goblins, get ready for some hack'n and slash'n, and, please, don't try this at home.

When they say Grave Yardage, they aren't kidding. This isn't a game of tackling and blocking. It's a game of ripping, bashing, and all-out mayhem. Playing four players to a side, you choose the plays from a scrolling play list, control the players, and do your best to make a Smashdown (touchdown sounds pretty inappropriate in this game). Although this game bears a striking resemblance to football, there are some differences. For instance, instead of the coin toss at the beginning, you spin a mummy. The 'ball' is actually a winged eye called a Flyball that flys where you send it, though it has a tendency to run around in circles if it hits the ground. That's because it is actually a cross between a chicken and the eye of a cyclops.

Scoring is unique in this game—100 points for a smashdown, acing an opponent (killing it, basically) is 86 points (eighty-six, get it?), and mobbing the quarterback is worth points depending on the ferocity of the attack. Penalties are also unusual. Littering (a 25 point penalty) occurs when a player steps on a land mine and blows up. Failing to snap the ball within ten seconds of lining up costs five snargs (yards?) and is called Boring the Fans.

Tongue in Cheek... or on the Ground?

As you can probably tell by now, this is an imaginative, and often humorous game. However, it does have some real play value. Pick from a list of pre-set offensive and defensive plays (with names like Five Alive, Dual Death, or Blitzer of Ows), or create your own playbook—sketching out the routes of your two recievers while assigning blocking to the center, or choosing blitz, man-to-man, or zone coverage for your defensive players individually.

Dr. Frankenstein's Lab

Design the field, choosing grass, weeds, or mud for any portion of the area. The mines are supplied automatically. If you want to get fully involved, you can also pick a team. Choose players according to their ratings for Agility, Intelligence, Speed, Stamina, Strength, Confidence, and Recuperation after injury. Each monster type is different. For instance, Zombies recover from injuries instantly, but have moronic intelligence and tend to fumble. Dwarfs and Wizards are good all-around players (a Wizard often makes a good quarterback).

A line of skulls indicates the relative strength of your on-field team. Before each play, it is a good idea to have the computer set up your personnel by using the Auto Balanced (or Auto Fast... Strong... Tough, and so forth) option. This gives you a team computer-selected to the qualities you desire. Or go into the bench and hand-pick the players you want on the field.

Smashdown!

As silly as the premise is, this is a fun game to play. You really can select plays, and, as in real football, choosing the right play against the right defense can lead to a score. In addition, you can do some things you can't do in the NFL; for instance, you can try to hack the receiver's arms off before the ball arrives. There is no pass interference in this game! Options include using your own field, play list, and teams, as well as playing against the computer or against another human. A joystick is recommended, though keyboard control is also possible.

My only real complaint is that Grave Yardage is pretty slow between plays. On a faster machine, the wait is tolerable. On slower machines, it gets frustrating pretty fast. Still, if you like football games, you may enjoy this one for the variety it offers. My favorite move is to run down the field and lead pursuing players over some mines. They're not too smart, and the maneuver often works.

Grave Yardage exceeds my expectations as a game. It's not a simulation (thank goodness), but an arcade-style football game with lots of good humor and good fun. It may be overly cute from time to time, but it stands up as a game with enough challenge and violence (I mean variety) to keep me coming back.

Mediagenic's Grave Yardage, 512K (CGA/EGA/Tandy, $34.95).

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Horsehide Heaven (Software Field of Dreams)

by Rusel DeMaria

Our national pasttime–baseball. This year's World Series focused a lot of attention on baseball, as have several movies over the past year. And recently, two new baseball games were released–each offering unique features and fun:

Hardball II

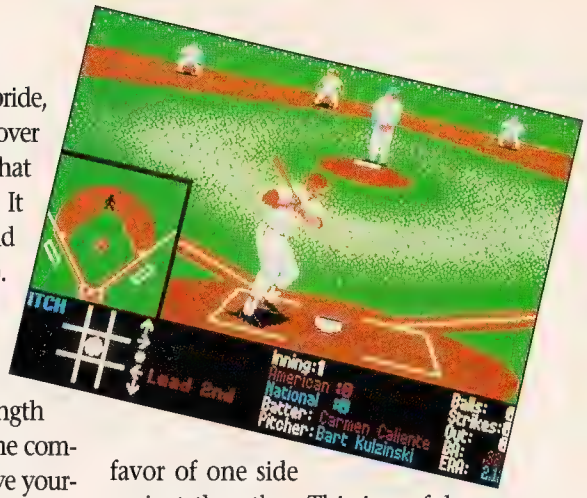
I still remember Accolade's original Hardball game. It featured excellent graphics and a pretty challenging arcade-style game of baseball. It was one of the best when it first came out. Now Hardball has grown up. In a world of complex simulations like Earl Weaver Baseball, Hardball II has matured into one of those complete games with plenty of strategy and action to satisfy any player.

No Pushover

Don't make the mistake I did and try to play two good teams without checking the documentation first. It was about 28 to zip by the fifth or sixth inning before I decided to find out what was wrong (and I wasn't leading). I soon discovered that this game has lots of depth, and if I wanted to play a game I could win from the start, I'd have to pit the somewhat superhuman Sandlot Swingers (with batting averages like 1000 and ERAs of 0.00) against the Lotsa Losers (with batting averages of 000 and ERAs around 11.57—their ace pitcher has a won/loss record of 0/1000). The Lotsa Losers are so bad that a batter can hit what would be a sure double, I could field the ball, throw it accidentally to the pitcher, then relay to first for the out. These guys are really slow.

Getting Real

So, after vindicating my wounded pride, I settled down to look the game over more carefully, and I found out that there's little that isn't in this game. It comes with 10 fictional teams and several rosters (more on that later). In addition, you can create your own teams or modify the statistics of any player or team. Therefore, you can create teams of any strength you need. When playing against the computer (at least at first) it helps to give yourself an advantage.



Hardball II lists just about every statistic I've ever heard of...and quite a few I didn't even know existed. When you edit a player's stats, the program will automatically calculate such information as the batting average and slugging percentage, on base percentage, and a whole lot more. It also has a set of special statistical categories for pitchers. So you can create any kind of player, from seasoned veterans to raw rookies.

In addition to ordinary team and player manipulations, you can set up a league, place all players from selected teams (and from the rosters mentioned earlier) into a pool, and conduct a player draft. If you want to play in leagues with your friends, this is a good way to begin. You can also choose a stadium to play in and turn the designated hitter on or off.

Don't think that you'll run out of options once you enter the game itself. You can call time whenever you want, then make player substitutions, shift your infield or outfield, change the way you view the game, and make individual changes for 16 different game settings. These game settings can have a profound effect on the realism (or lack of it) in the game. For instance, one setting will require all pitchers to pitch over the plate—no nibbling at the edges and faking you out. Other settings control whether errors are possible, whether batting averages and other statistics are in effect or not (if not everyone is equal), whether stealing is allowed, if pitch speeds will vary, and so forth. Since you can adjust these settings separately for each team, it is possible to skew the game in favor of one side against the other. This is useful both when playing against the computer and also when playing with two players of unequal experience or skill. Basically, these settings can function as a handicapping system.

Ready for Action

Play Hardball II with a joystick or keyboard. Although the joystick is a little more convenient, the keyboard control works pretty well. In fact, one player can play both teams at the keyboard. The only really hard part is controlling fielding and base running at the same time.

You can view the action from one of several perspectives. You can play the whole game from a bird's eye view of the field, play from the pitcher's or the batter's perspective, or select pitcher/batter view to alternate the appropriate view, depending on whether you are on offense or defense.

At each pitch, the pitcher selects a pitch while the batter selects a swing. Pitchers can deliver fastballs, change-ups, curves, sinkers, and screwballs. Batters can take a full swing (with a corresponding loss in accuracy), hit for a grounder, take a normal swing, try for a sacrifice fly, or bunt. Squeeze plays are possible.

Next, the pitcher chooses whether to pitch inside, outside, over the plate, low, high, or combinations of these. At this point, if there are runners on base, the player at the plate can give the runners a lead off while the pitcher can try to pick them off. The batting player can choose a steal and set his player in motion next. After each pitch, the view shifts (if necessary) to the full field view. At this point, if the

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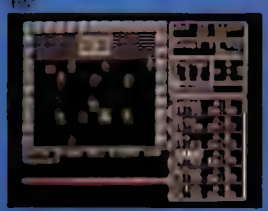

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ball isn't hit, the catcher can try to pick off a runner or throw a stealer out. On a hit, the nearest fielder automatically activates.

In the easiest level of the game, all choices made by pitchers and batters are shown on screen, including the location of the pitch. However, these on-screen references can be turned off, making the game much more challenging and satisfactory for two-player games.

Seventh Inning Stretch

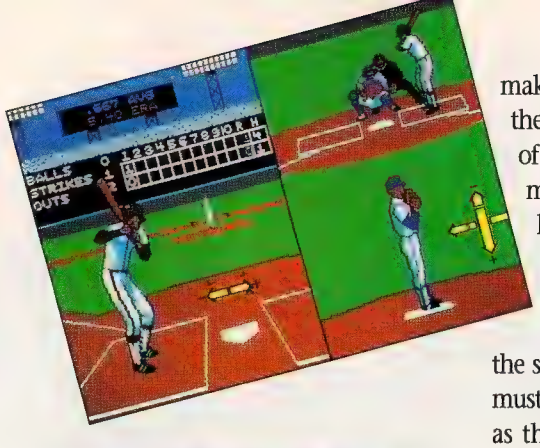
One gripe I have about this game is that the fielders seem to be running through Jello and if a ball gets by your infield, it can take a long time to retrieve. This is realistic, of course, but the biggest problem occurs when the ball is hit too close to the pitcher. Immediately, the pitcher becomes the active fielder, but the ball may squirt on past the infield. If you release all control buttons, the active fielder will change, but you lose precious time waiting, and the situation is frustrating. Still, the mechanics of fielding are fairly accurate, even if they are frustrating.

Throwing the ball is also tricky. You have to move the joystick, or press the appropriate keyboard key first, then press the throw button or key. I found myself pressing the joystick button as I chose a direction, but if my timing was off, the ball would go to the pitcher instead of the baseman I intended. It took some practice to remember to move the stick first, then press the button.

To take full advantage of the intricacies of this game, you need to use the "pull down" menus throughout the game. Using the menus, you'll adjust your fielders, warm up new pitchers, substitute pitchers and other players, and basically manage as well as play. You can ignore these aspects of the game, but you'll be shortchanging your team and missing a lot of the fun.

Hardball II takes a major step into the majors. This game is fun to play, challenging, and full of what baseball players love—statistics, strategy, and action.

Accolade's Hardball II, 512K (EGA, CGA, Hercules, Tandy, $39.95).



Orel Hershiser's Strike Zone

When I was younger, pitching seemed simpler. You just spit on the ball and threw it. No, not really, but today's pitching is so complex and scientific that you practically need a degree in physics to understand it all. Yet pitching is critical. If you look at the last two World Series, it was pitching that won. And it was Orel Hershiser who helped lead the Dodgers to their outstanding victory over the 1988 Oakland A's.

So who more fitting that Orel himself to endorse the best pitching/batting game available for the PC. Orel Hershiser's Strike Zone from Mastertronic, is based on a popular quarter-eating coin op. Not having played the arcade game, however, I was able to judge Strike Zone entirely on its merits as a computer game.

This is not a complete baseball simulation. You don't field the ball; the computer does that for you. All you really need to concentrate on is pitching and hitting (with a little base running thrown in). Or, if you want, you can try your hand at the Home Run Derby where you watch Orel throw you a series of pitches and you try to bat them out of there.

It's Gone, Gone, Gone...

The Home Run Derby moves quickly, especially if you pick the highest of four speeds. The pitches come in fast and you have to be ready. You can select the power of your swing (reading from an on-screen guage) and the angle of the bat, again with an on-screen prompt. Judging the height of the pitch and adjusting the bat angle at the last minute is pretty hard, though it can be done at slower speeds. However, you can make some guesses by watching where the pitcher is placing the ball. At the end of the Home Run Derby, you see how many pitches you took, how many homers you hit, the percentage of same, and the average and maximum distance you hit the ball.

Playing Strike Zone, the batting is the same as in the Home Run Derby. You must control power and bat angle, as well as the timing of your swing. However, Strike Zone is a complete baseball game in nine innings. Even though you don't do the fielding (in my case a blessing), you do control the strategic battle between the pitcher and the batter as well as the base running decisions.

The Magic Arm

In Strike Zone, pitching is the ultimate weapon. You select the location of the pitch, the amount and direction of curve, and the speed of the pitch. Curve and speed are set using a dual guage shaped like a cross, while pitch position is determined using a moving dot on the screen. In a two-player game, the batter can spy on the pitcher's settings, giving him an advantage. In a game against the computer, you don't see the aiming spot, but you can guess about where the ball will be since faster pitches tend to be higher and off speed pitches tend to drop. Using these three pitch settings, you can throw an amazing variety of pitches. Set up the batter with something fast and inside, then fan him out with something low and off speed.

It takes some getting used to, but once you learn how it works, you can place your pitches precisely, with just the right amount of curve. However, it only takes one careless toss, and you'll be watching the ball take a long ride.

I preferred to play the game at Speed Setting Two (the second from the fastest). Speed One was just too much for me, but for realists, that's certainly the closest to reality. Though strikeouts are the tools of Hershiser's trade, this program scored a home run with me.

Mastertronics' Strike Zone, 512K (CGA/EGA/VGA/MCGA/Hercules/Tandy, $39.99).

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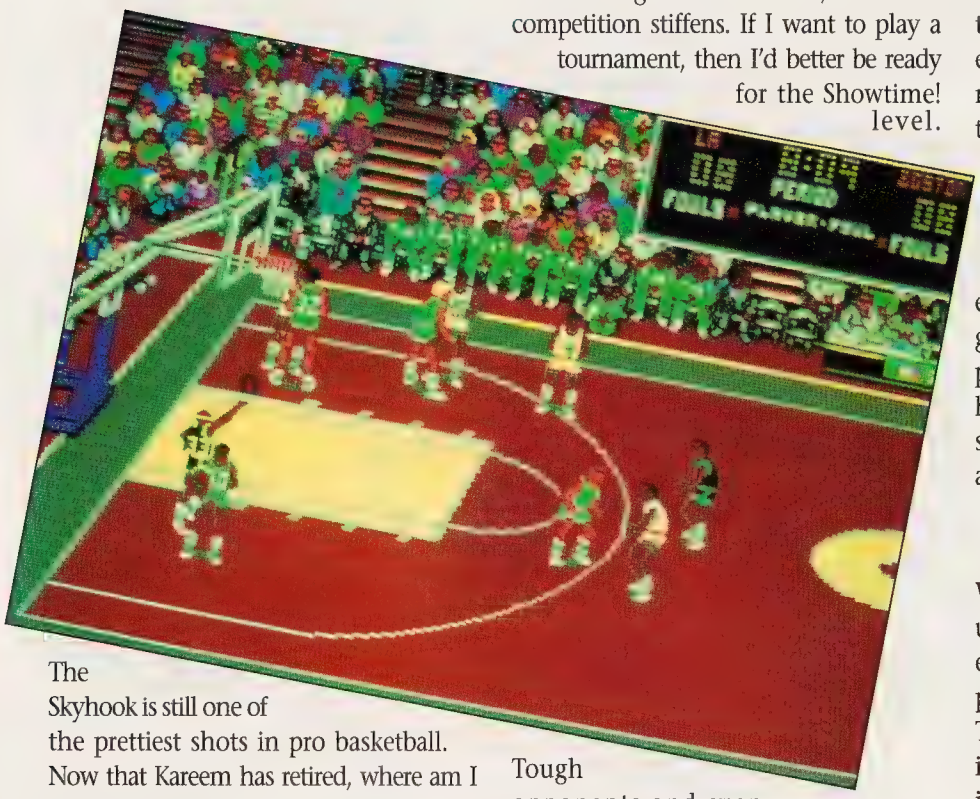
Lakers Vs. Celtics and the NBA Playoffs

by Rusel DeMaria



The Skyhook is still one of the prettiest shots in pro basketball. Now that Kareem has retired, where am I going to be able to see him shoot again? The only place I can think of (other than highlight films and retrospectives) is in the Lakers vs. Celtics in the NBA Playoffs from Electronic Arts.

Kareem's skyhook is only one of many patented moves included in this game of five-on-five basketball. In fact, eight 1989 NBA teams and their stars are represented here along with two all-star teams (East and West). Players like Magic, Worthy, Bird, Parish, Jordan, Isiah, and the Mailman are all easily identified.

Skyhooks

With a trampoline under me I might be able to dunk the ball, but that doesn't stop me from living vicariously through this game. Since I'm a Lakers fan, I like to control the Lakers team (using the joystick is most satisfactory). Depending on my mood, I may play in Arcade mode, where the players don't get tired, or in Simulation mode for more realism. In Simulation mode, the players' energy is shown numerically on the roster screen. When he gets tired, it's time for a rest!

For warm-ups, I'll play at Pre-Season level, but once I've gotten really into it, I'll move to Regular Season level, where the competition stiffens. If I want to play a tournament, then I'd better be ready for the Showtime! level. Tough opponents and even tougher referees. Whadaya mean, charging? Baaloney!

Lots of other options lend variety to the game, like setting the period length from two minutes (for those warm-ups) to regulation 12 minutes. Of course, I can play a two-player game with two joysticks or using the keyboard; however worthwhile opponents are often hard to find and the computer offers plenty of challenge.

This is a stunning game in higher graphic modes. Even non-gamers have stopped and commented on how nice the screen looks. The players are clearly defined, and many of them are easily identified just by their appearance. Even their height seems accurately depicted. Don't expect a smaller player—Isiah, for instance—to jump over a tall one like Kareem or Patrick Ewing. However, don't be surprised if he ducks around the big man and finger rolls it into the hoop.

Despite the excellence of the graphics, the court does get crowded from time to time. Though this is a full-court game, you only see one half of the court at a time. With ten players running the floor it's easy to lose track, not only of the players, but of the ball itself. However, I got used to the confusion and the occasional turnovers that resulted from passing right into the enemy's hands. In general, the players move around the court realistically. In fact, though you can't call actual plays, your teammates will continue to move around the court, providing you with plenty of opportunities to pass inside or drive the lane. In fact, passing is pretty easy. You just point your character in the general direction of a teammate, press the pass button (not the shoot button), and he'll almost always get the ball. It's easy to score by passing inside and then going for a jam, Skyhook, or whatever.

Jams and Stuffs

When I'm in trouble, I pass to Scott, then use Magic as a screen to rub off the defender and shoot an open three-pointer—a simple technique, and it works pretty well. That's the kind of realism you can achieve in Lakers vs. Celtics. However, as easy as it is to score, it's hard to defend. This is the one place where the interface of this game gets awkward. You control one player at a time; to switch active players, you must press a button. If the other team passes the ball, pressing the button will select the new ball carrier's defender. However, if you want to select another defender, you'll have to cycle through the defenders one after the other. Often, by the time you've chosen the one you want, it's too late. The shot's been taken. With practice, you can become pretty good at defense, though good timing is necessary to block a shot or steal the ball. You can even anticipate passes and pick them off.

It helps to know your teams, especially when playing in Simulation mode where situation substitutions are important. Individual 1989 statistics are included on the roster screens, in case you don't know all the players. On the other hand, these players perform uncannily like their real counterparts, so I think it's a real advantage to know who's who. For instance, I try to think like Pat Riley when I substitute

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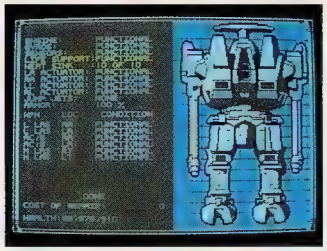

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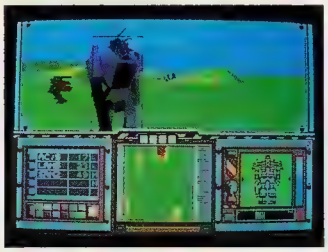

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for the Lakers. Having watched lots of their games, I have a feeling for when to bring in Cooper or Mychal Thompson from the bench to give Kareem a breather, or to add defensive skills. One minor quibble: Kareem plays a lot more like the Kareem of several years ago than the 1989 version, but I'm not complaining. On the other hand, it's not so easy to fast break in this game, and with running teams like the Lakers, that's a real loss. Defenders react too quickly, spoiling most fast break opportunities.

In all, Lakers vs. Celtics is a game for NBA fans. Its arcade-like action gets you right into the game, and in a two-player game, the scoreboard can really light up. It's FAN-tastic!

Electronic Arts' Lakers vs. Celtics, 384K (EGA/CGA/Tandy, $49.95).

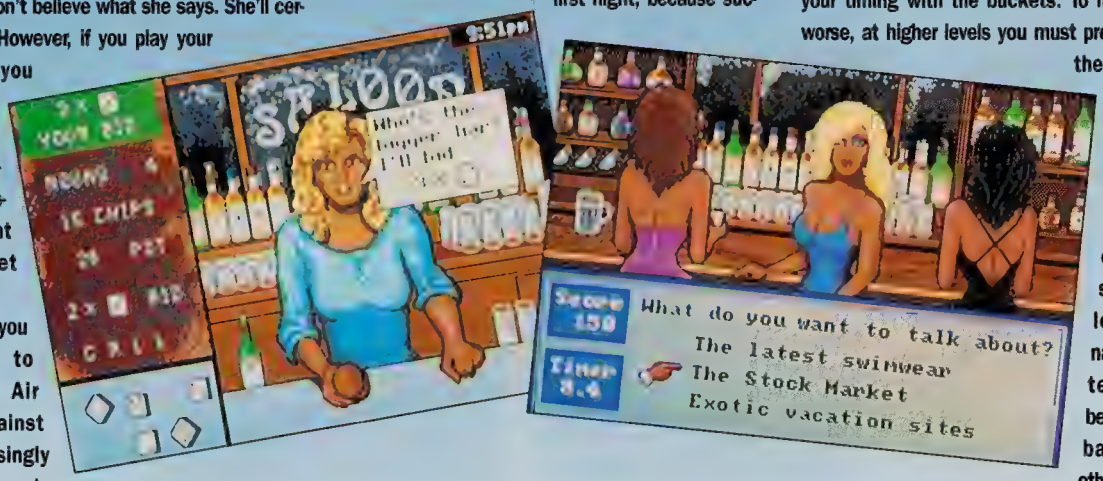
Bar Games

Russi DeMaria

Hero or goat–win or lose, it's a great tradition to celebrate, or drown your sorrows in the friendly neighborhood bar. You've taken your knocks on the playfield, now its party time!

You don't have to play Accolade's new Bar Games after a session with your favorite sports game, but it helps the atmosphere. After the competition and hard-hitting action of a good game, it's nice to come to the relaxed, friendly place where "everybody knows your name." In Accolade's bar, you can try a few traditional, and some not-so-traditional activities.

For intellectual fun, try a game of Liar's Dice. Your opponent, a buxom bartender, plays a fair game. But don't believe what she says. She'll certainly bluff. However, if you play your dice right, you can parlay an initial small wad into an impressive amount of pocket change.



Next, you might like to play some Air Hockey against four increasingly difficult opponents. Control your paddle and try to fake out your opponent, sliding the puck past his or her guard. But be careful not to let them smash past your own defense, or you'll be looking at a lopsided score.

Try your hand at bartender in Last Call. Here you must fill, then slide the beer mugs to the waiting patrons. Using a power bar (reminiscent of the Mean 18 power bar) estimate the amount of force needed. Too soft, and the mug slides to the floor. Too hard and the customer can't hold on, and it's once again smash city. But get it jussst right, and you'll meet your quota before time runs out. Then it's on to an even tougher shift.

O.K. Now we're beginning to get interesting. In Pick-up Artist, your goal is to get a date. First, find the girl who sent you that provocative note. She's the one with the flower in her hair, but there are three girls at the bar, with their backs to you. By asking the right questions of them, one at a time, attempt to gain their interest. This activity is complicated by the selection cursor, which moves randomly past your three choices. If your timing is off, you'll ask the wrong question and it's bye bye potential date. Each of the three girls is different, but with a little experimentation, you'll discover who responds to which line of questioning. Once you learn that, it's just a matter of timing your choices against the ever uncooperative cursor.

You want to find the girl with the flower the first night, because success leads to a date the next evening. Then, once again, you have to choose from among three choices of actions (like ordering the right drink) or conversation (like talking about lawyers or sports, or whatever). Succeed in this first date, and there's a second, and a third. Meanwhile, the cursor has begun to act more and more nervous (perhaps echoing your anticipation of the Big Reward that will occur if you successfully negotiate that third date). Anyway, suffice it to say that you'll more than often pick the wrong choice, even if you know what the right one is. Since each girl follows a particular path, you can learn the correct reponses fairly quickly. Then the game simply becomes a battle with the cursor. For that reason, I was a little disappointed by Pick-up Artist.

Not so, the Wet 'N Wild wet tee-shirt event. First you choose a man or woman to be the contestant (where most of this game is male oriented, this event offers the ladies equal time). Then your job is to gob the contestant with water released from buckets along the catwalk as he or she struts on the stage below. Each successful soaking reveals more of the contestant's anatomy in a close-up view at the top of the screen, though the game is definitely a PG rated game at best and the close-up is only from the waist up. However, each succeeding contestant displays increasingly more 'obvious' anatomical development, and moves more erratically, messing up your timing with the buckets. To make things worse, at higher levels you must prevent one of the other contestants from permanently destroying your buckets, and at still higher levels, a nasty character tries to bean you with barbells and other heavy objects. Even the stage lights will give you a shock if you dump water on one that is lit, so you have plenty to worry about. On the other hand, a good score will earn you extra buckets.

In all, Bar Games is a pretty satisfying collection of activities you might find in your local bar. And you don't have to worry about a designated driver, either. It's all good, clean fun with no hangovers.

Bar Games, 512K (CGA/EGA/Hercules/Tandy, $39.95).

Great Games

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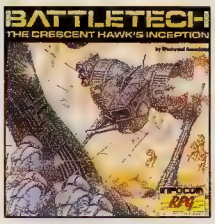

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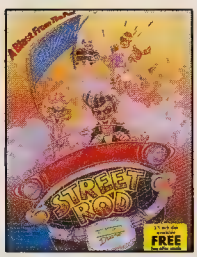

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Face Off

by Rick Teverbaugh

I'm a hockey nut. There is probably nobody within 100 miles of me who follows the sport with as much vigor. I often pick up my subscription copy of The Hockey News before I get to my copy of The Sporting News.

When I saw the big letters on the documentation: "I Went to the Fights and a Hockey Game Broke Out," I was leery of GameStar's Face Off. Add to that the unfortunate choice of art for the box (two players slugging it out with a referee trying to intervene), and I was ready to bark at the dog I expected to find inside.

Fortunately that wasn't the case. Though I think fighting is given too much time in both the program and the documentation, it is possible to turn the fights off if you'd rather just skate. I will give Gamestar credit in that they attempted to cover every aspect of the sport and I'll be the first to admit that fighting is certainly part of the pro version.

But on to the more positive aspects of the game. It is gorgeous in VGA or EGA. The figures are well-drawn and respond both quickly and realistically to joystick or key- board instructions. Play against the computer, against a human foe, or let the computer control both sides. Or gang up on the computer–play with a friend on the same team. Face Off has off-disk copy protection, so it is hard disk installable.

Two Views

Two close-up screens come into play at various times during the game. When a player has a close shot at the goal and holds down the joystick button, the view shifts to a point behind the attacking player. Depending on which side you're playing, you line up the shot and let fly or control the goalie's attempt to stop that incoming missile.

The second close-up screen is called the Fight Cam. Not only can you see a close view of the fight, but you can also control the battle with 16 different options. The loser is taken off the ice and the winner's team skates with a man advantage. As a hockey purist, I wasn't happy with the result. This is like saying that it's all right to fight in hockey as long as you win. My advice is to put this feature on for your first game and leave it off thereafter, but it is a matter of choice.

The second action button on the joystick controls the changing of lines and there are fatigue meters at the top of the screen to show how much energy each line has left.

There are several options on the opening menu. Periods can be three, ten or the real-life 20 minutes. There can be two, four or six players on the ice for each team. The computer can be handicapped by means of three skill level settings, and rules are either full, relaxed (no offsides or icing) or totally absent.

League Options

Play exhibition games or in a league. The computer sets up league scheduling; you tell it how many games you want to play. If you make it to the playoffs, you can choose the length of each playoff series. Once you take ownership of a team it is possible to move players up and down from the majors to the minors, and even retire the older vets to make room for promising rookies. You can also alter the names of any players. Now's your chance to have Mario Lemieux, Wayne Gretzky, and Gordie Howe on the same team!

For those very familiar with the sport, there's a playbook where up to 16 plays can be stored, though only four are active at any time and all teams share the same book.

Face Off offers four different sound options, including the Roland MT32 sound board, the Ad-Lib Music Card, Tandy sound, and the internal speaker used in most PCs and compatibles.

Aside from some obvious and avoidable faults, Face Off plays a lot like real hockey and makes the sport come to life on the screen. It also gets high marks for depth, and, with my stated reservations, I recommend it's purchase.

Face Off, 512K (CGA/EGA/VGA/MCGA/Tandy, $44.95).

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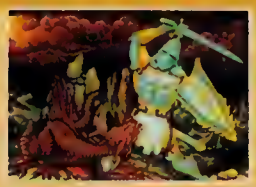

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Wayne Gretzky Hockey

by Rick Teverbaugh

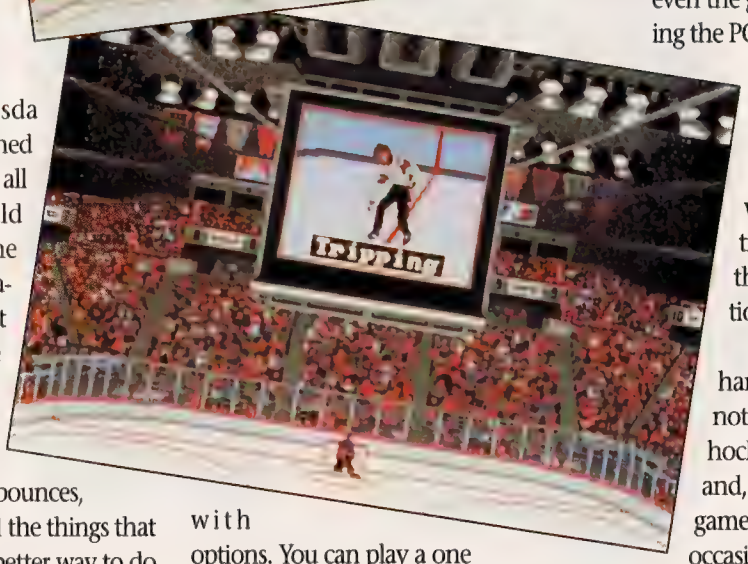
Ice hockey is a tough sport. No, I don't mean just the physical action. It's tough to reproduce on the computer as well. With 12 players on the ice at any one time, gliding on skates and slamming the puck at a higher rate of speed than any other projectile in team sports, I think I understand why there aren't more hockey simulations. Additionally, you have to have lots of statistics to do an accurate job, and statistics in hockey are not as readily available as they are in many other sports. Finally, remember that, unless you live in Canada, hockey is isolated to certain regions in the U.S., so you have to win new fans.

The Right Stuff

Knowing all this, Bethesda Softworks was still determined to give their hockey game all the realism a floppy could hold. The end result is the best executed sports simulation I've seen for any sport on any machine. The game has a flow and feel that is pure hockey— including checking, penalties, bad passes, great passes, funny bounces, even digitized fights and all the things that make hockey great. What better way to do a hockey game than by getting "The Great One," Mr. Gretzky himself, involved in the game? His stamp on the simulation is best felt in the way the game plays and in the reaction of the players on the ice.

Individual ratings in 11 skill areas maintain each player's personality and realism, and the game comes with a half-dozen real NHL teams of the past—including two of Gretzky's teams, one from Edmonton and one from Los Angeles. For an additional $19.95 you can add the 1988 or 1989 data disks containing all 21 teams from that year. Or, if you want the full dose of realism, try the hockey league simulator ($34.95) for drafting teams, organizing leagues, scheduling games and generating reports from simulated game stats. And finally, for the truly bloodthirsty, there's a disk with additional fight 'videos' for $19.95.

Wayne Gretsky Hockey is loaded



with options. You can play a one or two-player game, or watch the computer play both teams. Choose from among four skill level settings for each team individually, in case you need to even the odds. At this point you can pick a player, take to the ice, and take your best shot. Or you can be a player/coach—making the decisions on the sidelines as well as in the front lines. Keep fresh troops coming in and out while controlling a player on the ice. This is easily one of the most challenging tasks on any sports simulation.

The Brain Trust

If you're feeling cerebral on any particular day, try my favorite play method—coach only. Get into running plays (there are five from which to choose), changing lines and cheering on the troops. While it might seem simple to take one line-up off the ice and put another on, the truth is that timing is everything. One false move and you can have three attackers from the other team steaming up ice at an unprotected goalie. That'll get your blood flowing.

Other options let you set the period length, game speed, and fight toggle (yes they can be removed so as not to teach young players bad habits). You can save and print game statistics; also save games in progress. You can create your own teams and modify player statistics, or create leagues to challenge your friends. The hockey league simulator disk is highly recommended for this.

The graphics are stunning and even the game sounds aren't bad considering the PC's limitations. Each game is completely different, from wild 7-5 penalty-filled contests to nail-biting 2-1 games and even overtimes. For those not that familiar with the sport, the documentation includes about four pages of the major hockey rules and regulations.

Off disk copy protection makes hard drive installation a snap, but not without a price. Picking the right hockey figure in the manual is tricky, and, even after a month or so with the game, I still pick the wrong figure on occasion, sending me into a demo, or into a reboot.

Goal!

This game can create hockey fans out of gamers who get caught up in the excitement and realism. Even if you've never been a hockey fan before, if you like computer sports games, you'll love this one. Wayne Gretzky Hockey is worth the price and then some.

Wayne Gretzky Hockey, 512K (CGA/EGA/VGA; $54.95).

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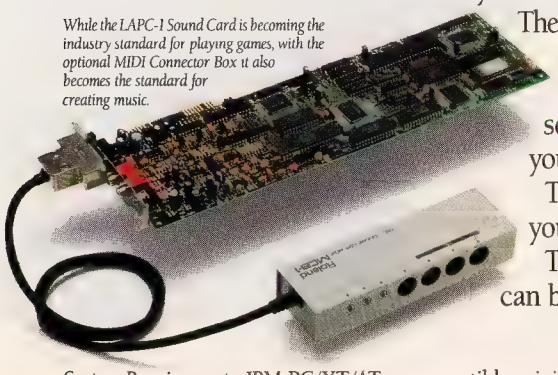

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Keith Van Eron's Pro Soccer

by Rick Teverbaugh

Keith Van Eron's Pro Soccer is crafted with an obvious love of the sport. Obviously not everyone connected with the packaging shared that same passion, but more on that later.

Graphically the game isn't stunning, even in EGA mode, but it is passable. The sound isn't overwhelming either, though it does support the Ad-Lib Music Card and that adds some music when the program loads.

What is impressive about this entry is the depth of the menu choices and the feel for the sport; and those are things likely to keep the game within arm's length of the computer long after the rest of the window dressing has become old hat.

Indoor or Out?

The foremost of these menu choices is the ability to play the game either in the traditional outdoor venue as it is played around the world, or in the U.S. hybrid indoors, the venue in which Van Eron enjoyed his popularity. That decision has more than cosmetic effect. First-timers will want to select the outdoors choice not only for its historical perspective, but also because the game plays much more slowly and gives you time to hone your skills.

Another good starting tip is to select the Medalist International Challenge. In the outdoor mode, you'll start against the weakest of 16 World Cup Teams and only move up the ladder by winning. In the indoor mode you'll start against the weakest of six U.S. teams and work your way up.

Once you've risen to the top in that competition, you'll be ready for the World Cup/All-Star Tournament. Start by choosing your team. Picking a country with a high rating, like Italy or Brazil, increases your chances of winning—a good idea the first few times anyway. The program then matches the teams. Or play the indoor tournament, choosing one of the U.S. squads.

The other menu choices make it possible to play with two or more human participants in a league. The program won't schedule the matches, but it does keep track of points won and maintain standings. Or you can just slug it out with a second human foe in a friendly exhibition.

Corner Kick

During the game, the player you control with keyboard or joystick (indicated by flickering form) will move in eight directions on the field. Once you control the ball, you can use any of five kicks (two bananas, a volley, a chip and a scissors). The fire button controls the strength of the shot.

When a beep sounds that means your opponent is near your goal with the ball. You then assume the goalkeeper chores and can make him dive left or right, or jump straight up to defend the net. Turn the slow motion replay of each goal on or off as you prefer. It is also possible to control the strength of the banana kicks and turn off weather as a variable if you're playing outdoors.

The documentation has its good and bad points. There is some useful information about the history and practice of soccer, including a pictorial look at soccer technique. However, the manual seems to have been somewhat hastily slapped together. Screen shots are black and white and a bit fuzzy; one of them is even printed upside-down.

Though it's not perfect, I would have to recommend Keith Van Eron's Pro Soccer. I haven't seen any better for the PC so far. At least until soccer makes some more strides in this country, this is likely to be as good as it gets for a while.

Keith Van Eron's Pro Soccer, 384K (EGA/CGA/Tandy/Hercules, $34.95).

World Trophy Soccer

By Rusel DeMaria

Another way to look at soccer is taken by Mastertronic's World Trophy Soccer. In this game, the players are nicely detailed full figures seen from a 3/4 perspective. Although you see only a part of the field at any one time, the screen scrolls amazingly smoothly and the players run with animated legs pumping.

The ball motion in World Trophy Soccer is also very good. The ball bounces realistically, as if there were real gravity inside your computer.

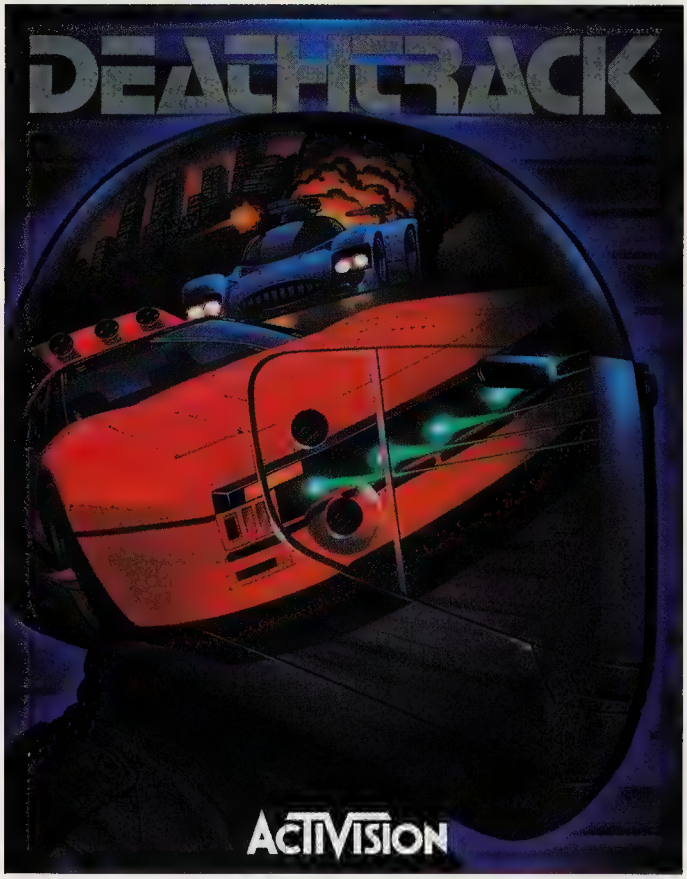
Whenever a player takes the ball close to the goal, the scene shifts to a shot from behind the goalie. The shooting player tries to line up his shot while the goalie tries to anticipate the direction the ball will go and dive for it. This is pretty realistic with the exception that the shooting player doesn't have to worry about any opposing players stealing the ball. He can pretty much take his time. You can take shots from outside this area, but most of them simply dribble into the goalie's hands.

Although we saw World Trophy Soccer in a preliminary form, the game seemed enjoyable. The goal is to play one progressively more difficult team after another, finally working your way up to Brazil. Each team is modeled after real teams around the world, and includes tendencies of that team. For instance, some teams are more aggressive than others; some foul a lot.

This is an all action game. It doesn't have any instant replay or complex league play options. It is, however, lots of fun to play and graphically very satisfying. From what we could see, World Trophy Soccers should score a goal with most players.

World Trophy Soccer (CGA/EGA/Tandy, $39.99).

Everyone on the Road is Armed and Dangerous



Hurtling through the turn, you lock-on to the lead car and fire. In less than a second, your Falcon missile slams into the target and explodes in a ball of fire. You smile to yourself —he was a good assassin, but a lousy driver. Instantly, your radar detects a Terminator bearing down on your exhaust. You swerve, but it's too late. A small mistake ends another brief career on the *DEATHTRACK*—yours.

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Omni-Play Horse Racing

by Rick Teverbaugh

Omni-Play Horse Racing is probably the Triple Crown of thoroughbred racing or at the very least the Breeders' Cup. With a complete series of easy-to-reach menu options, the program does everything but put you up in the saddle (and that's promised for next year).

Welcome to SportTime Park, the home of Omni-Play Horse Racing! Armed with a fistful of loot and a pocketful of dreams, you'll compete against up to three other human foes and against as many as 19 computer-controlled bettors in a most enjoyable day at the races. I doubt the Marx Brothers had this much fun at the track.

A Day at the Races

The core of the standard program is the Handicapper's Tournament. In that mode you can select the number of players, the amount of money to start with and the conditions for winning the tournament. There are three ways to win: when a particular money level is reached, when you've bet in a certain number of races, or when a certain number of races have been run.

Before putting down your cash, view the past history of each horse. Information on each run includes the type and distance of each race, the jockey, post position, number of horses, final finish, lengths ahead or behind the winner, and the speed rating. (As a nit-picker for detail it would have been nice to see a line telling the horse's position at various points during a race—information available in the Racing Form.) You can even buy a tip from one of the computer bettors. Some of them look pretty shady but, fortunately, you can check out their stats before you shell out any dough.

Just as at the real race track, bet to win, place, show, exacta, quinella, or triple. An easy at-the-window mode of picking bets will have you quickly spending money in (almost) painless fashion.

Front Runner

But for me, the running of the race is still the most exciting part. The Track 1 module that comes with the game has 128 horses; somewhere between six to nine run in each race. In this module the races are run in CGA. All the horses look alike in the side view, which is what you'll see when they're on the frontstretch or backstretch. When they reach the turns you'll see an overhead view and numbers instead of the horse graphics. You can also shift to this view when they're on the stretches to make it easier to locate your horse. Across the bottom of the screen is a constant readout of the horses' current positions in the race.

The Track 2 module contains 128 different horses and EGA, which not only makes for a more attractive presentation, but since some of horses are black, some bay, some gray; it is easier to pick out your steed.

Extra Modules

Another module available now is the Stable Owners Option. In this mode the 128 horses are divided among the owners and the idea is to win purses in races rather than bet on the horses. Being a good judge of horseflesh during the auction process and then picking the right spots for your thoroughbreds to run is the key.

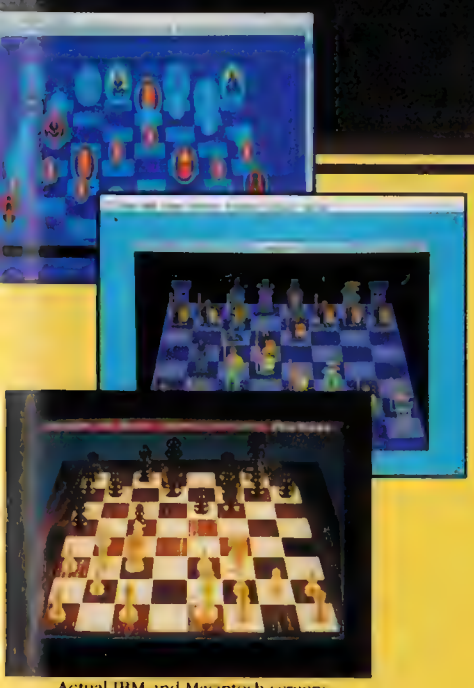
The races are run in approximately real-time. For players in a hurry, there is a fast play mode that shows only the stretch run. After each race the horse's history is updated as is your track record as a bettor or owner.

But SportTime isn't content to stop here. In the future they plan historical racing simulations with such names as Secretariat, Affirmed, Man-O-War, Citation, and Seabiscuit. They also figure to have a jockey competition that puts you on the horse's back; prediction analysis to help you pick winners not only for this game, but also in real life track visits; plus fantasy betting and fantasy stables where you'll be able to match wits with other gamers across the country.

For equine fans, it's hard to imagine a more complete package. Perhaps they should consider the same type of presentation for harness racing. I wish you good luck, but if you land in debtor's prison, don't bother calling me. I'll be at the track.

Omni-Play Horse Racing, 210K (256K for EGA; $49.95; track 2 disk $14.95; Stable Owners module $19.95).

I am Sargon
and I challenge YOU...



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IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN

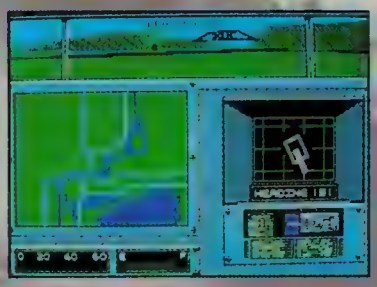
Tin Can Battles—Tank Simulators

by R.E. Bille, Lt USN

You awake to an artificial garbling noise that, as your head clears, you recognize as the tight strained voice of your driver forced through the plastic diaphragm of a gas mask. A Soviet advance recon unit has been spotted in the tree line 1000 meters to your front, the day is already shaping up to be a real peach. Wanting desperately to wipe the sweat out of your own mask, you marvel at how you have managed to endure its claustrophobic embrace for this long. A quick glance up and down the ridge assures you that the remainder of the company has been awakened, their vacant stares either a product of recent slumber, or testimony to unspoken fears. The morning holds a stillness that foreshadows the coming storm. A week ago, none of you would have dreamed this possible, but now it is difficult to remember having lived any other way. First bird song is shattered unceremoniously with the flat scream of ripping cloth that marks the bombardment. Through the earth saturated air, you vaguely make out the van of a Soviet Armored column. Yeah...today is going to be a real peach.

Armored warfare has never been a cake walk. Modern armored warfare, like the scenario depicted above, is a nightmarish exercise in sheer killing power. Though military simulations only capture part of the story, they can serve to help the armchair tactician appreciate the danger and destruction of real modern combat.

Vehicle simulators have risen from novelty to mainstay in the realm of computer programming. As such, it is not surprising that several of the major software publishers have chosen to produce M-1 Main Battle Tank simulators virtually simultaneously. Christmas shoppers may have experienced some indecision as they scanned the shelves and see Abrams Battle Tank (Electronic Arts), Steel Thunder (Accolade), M-1 Tank Platoon (Microprose) and Tank (Spectrum Holobyte). Knowledgeable buyers already know that each of these publishers promise quality...and they usually deliver. Although Spectrum Holobyte's product was unavailable for review, we do look at the other three, and provide some comments on what we expect of Tank.



Finding your way through Abrams.

Solo Shots

Abrams Battle Tank focuses upon the M-1, and sends players on either single missions, or a campaign on the European Front. Mission types vary: Defend your base against waves of attacking Soviet armor. Assault vital bridge heads. Or rescue downed units behind enemy lines. It is important to note that none of the scenarios reflect actual armored tactics (because a single tank would not be utilized in this manner) but, given that, the missions are challenging and exciting.

Operate the vehicle from any of four perspectives: cupola, tank commander, driver, or gunner stations. I usually found myself in the gunner position, with periodic trips to the driver screen to make course adjustments. Interior instrumentation is vastly simplified and has some additional displays which aid game play, but have no basis in reality. This brings up the question of simulation validity. Abrams Battle Tank is not a full simulator. For comparison, this product is to a full simulation what the original F-15 Strike Eagle is to Falcon AT. Is that bad? Well no, when you consider that F-15 has been so successful that players have demanded, and have just gotten, an updated version of the game.

Abrams utilizes a polygon fill graphics presentation that works exceedingly well for terrain representation. In fact, the ability to utilize terrain tactically is one of this product's advantages. Unfortunately, enemy vehicles appear blocky and reminiscent of something from a science fiction movie. Game play can be very fast and exciting but, just as in real life, don't expect constant arcade level action. To succeed, a good deal of thought must be put into

mission planning and execution. With the exception of the Mossel Intercept mission, time is not critical; therefore a cautious advance is better than running amok through hill and dale.

Pot shots in Abrams.

Three types of ammunition are available: SABOT, (essentially a high density armor piercing shell encased in an outer boot that detaches in flight) HEAT, (a thermal shaped charge designed to send a jet of molten steel into the interior of opposing tanks) and an experimental round termed the AX. The latter is a main gun TOW round that, in reality, may never see service depending upon certain decisions of Congress.

Abrams Battle Tank succeeds as a hybrid action/strategy game, despite the minor gripes noted above. If you're seeking a true representation of modern armored combat, this is not your vehicle. If, however, you're looking for a challenging distraction from incoming rounds in the real world, Abrams can punch your ticket.

From the opening screen on, Accolade's Steel Thunder provides a visual feast and relatively non-stop excitement. Command any of the following vehicles: M48A5 Patton, M60A3 MBT, M-1 Abrams or the M3 Bradley Cavalry Fighting Vehicle. Each vehicle's interior is depicted in loving detail—at all command stations—and control panels reflect actual functions and indications.

Fight in one of three theatres of action: Cuba, Syria or Europe. Within each theatre, missions become increasingly difficult, and completion of each theatre is necessary prior to advancing to the next. Naturally, the European theatre is the most advanced as you will face crack Soviet troops and absolutely wicked helicopter pilots. M-1 ammo load outs are incorrect (no HEP or "Beehive" rounds exist for the 120mm, although M60A3's use them) but some missions require these rounds so players cannot arbitrarily ignore them in the interest of realism. Crew selection is included in mission planning, with each driver, gunner and loader rated for various skills related to his field. Once again, single tank tactics are depicted, contrary to Army doctrine. According to the designer, the single tank model was chosen to improve game flow.

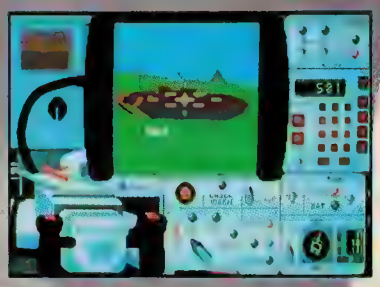
Steel Thunder maintains a service record for each player, listing his rank, medals and combat summary. Veterans of the game will build some impressively high, and somewhat idealistic combat summaries, which serve to remind us that this is a game and nothing more.

The program's biggest drawback is the inability to use terrain tactically. With the exception of trees and occasional buildings that block line of sight, all combat occurs on a flat grid with mountains looming in the background. Despite the limitations, this is a polished product guaranteed to burn up your tank treads for many hours.

Based upon the shortfalls of the two games already discussed, discerning readers should be forming an impression of what the ultimate simulator of modern armored combat should include:

1) Tank Platoon tactics vs. single unit tactics.
2) Full use of terrain features.
3) Supporting elements (artillery, close air support, etc.).
4) Realistic portrayal of enemy units, abilities and tactics.
5) Ability to assume operational, tactical or individual command of friendly units.

M-1 Tank Platoon offers a full tank simulation. Microprose has long been considered an industry leader in the field of simulations and it looks as though they will not relinquish the title with this release.



Taking aim in M1 Tank Platoon.

Assume command of a four tank platoon with a compliment of sixteen men. Each of these men has a name, rank and quality rating related to his job (Tank Commander, Gunner, Driver and Loader). As the "guiding spirit" of the platoon, you may either issue tactical orders to the tank platoon (or any other supporting elements of the mission), issue orders to a particular vehicle, or assume the role of any member of the platoon as the situation dictates. Although obtaining a first person perspective of the impending assault (via the latter option) can be enlightening, dallying too long behind a gun sight can be detrimental to the overall mission (more on that later).

Initially, tank crews are green and inexperienced, or in some cases inept, at their assigned jobs. Static and mobile gunnery ranges are provided for training purposes (more yours than theirs) but actual skill levels and promotions do not occur until you enter the crucible of "real" combat. Initiate your new crews on any of six single missions:

Blitzkrieg–Rapid advance through Soviet lines to exploit their weakened position.

Meeting Engagement–Advance on a given objective against an enemy force who is attempting to do the same.

Hasty Attack–Quick probe against an enemy position, usually without benefit of supporting elements.

Assault–Take a given objective regardless of the cost.

Defend–Hold your position regardless of the cost.

Rearguard–Delay the enemy's advance while minimizing your losses.

Or you may decide to fight a campaign. Each campaign is different because the platoon's level of success or failure has a direct bearing on the types of battles that will be fought, the duration of the campaign, and even the outcome of the war. If the initial Soviet thrust is turned back, then you progress into meeting engagements and assaults. Should one or more of the offensive missions be less than successful, you soon find yourself on the defensive or, worse yet, fighting desperate rearguard actions against overwhelming odds.

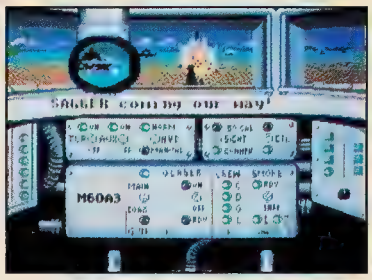
Traditionally, Blitzkrieg type missions are the easiest and Rearguard actions the most difficult. Terrain, availability of supporting forces, and degree of enemy opposition can drastically alter the complexity of any of these missions, however, so the uncertainty inherent in actual combat is maintained. The fact that each of these factors, plus weather conditions, are randomized yields millions of possible scenario variants. Needless to say, this game rates high for repeated play.

U.S. forces can call on a wide variety of ground and air support units: M113 Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) which contain infantry units armed with Dragon anti-tank missiles and Stinger anti-air missiles. M2 Bradley Armored Fighting Vehicles (AFVs), similar to M113's but with the added punch. TOW anti-tank missiles. M901 Missile carriers, the M113 chassis mounted with a high capacity TOW launcher. M3 Cavalry Fighting Vehicles (CFVs), faster and more heavily armored than their predecessors, with a 25mm Chain gun that can chew up Soviet APC's and AFV's, and Stinger missiles for air defense. M163 PIVADS, mobile air defense units sporting Vulcan 20mm anti-air cannon (similar to those used by the U.S. Navy for close in missile defense). Off map artillery, including 227mm rockets, 155mm Howitzers or 107mm mortars for the laying of high explosive or smoke bombardments. Finally, there's air support in the form of OH-58D Scout helicopters, AH-64 Apache Attack helicopters, or A-10 Tank busters.

Checking equipment in Steel Thunder.

Each of these support forces possess certain inherent strengths and weaknesses. Learning how best to utilize then in concert with your M-1 Tank platoon in any given tactical scenario is one of the most challenging, and most rewarding aspects of the game.

Although you have no direct control over the types of Soviet units you will face, you can determine the quality of those units. Soviet troops may be either Second Line (reserve troops with antiquated equipment and little training), First Line (some equipment upgrades and better training), Veterans (Afghanistan units whose tactics are much less predictable), or Guards (Soviet elite units who possess the finest equipment and training the massive Soviet military budget can muster). Selection of the higher levels not only increases the quality of your opponent, it also ensures a more pessimistic view of damage to U.S. units.


Inside Steel Thunder.

In addition to the immediate objectives of the individual missions, players seek to develop the skills of their platoons. A platoon history is maintained as long as one member remains alive at the end of a battle. If the mission was a success, you may have several promotions or decorations to distribute. Each such endowment raises the skill level of that particular crewman and, consequently, his prowess in future engagements. At the end of this sequence repairs are made and casualties are replaced by inexperienced crew. After ninety-nine engagements (not an easy feat to be sure) platoons are retired and their overall ranking recorded for posterity.

M-1 Tank Platoon is a tough game to say the least, but there are ways to make it still harder. The program proved too vast for standard C compilers, so it is written exclusively in machine language. In order to accommodate the huge variety of machine/processor types currently in use, Microprose used an innocuous toggle called "more detail/less detail" to allow machines of different horse power to run the game at the proper speed. Utilizing the "more detail" option on more powerful computers significantly increases the number of units the program can manipulate and, since the number of U.S. units remains relatively fixed, guess who gets all the extra units. Even second rate Soviet formations can be quite overwhelming when given the ability to conduct Iranian Human Wave (IHW) attacks.

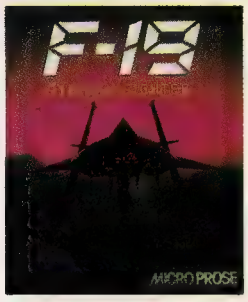
In addition to all of the positive attributes already discussed, M-1 Tank Platoon possesses superior graphics (the night combat sequences are best) and a very user friendly interface. Additionally, the ability to step outside any of the vehicles in the battle—rotate, pan and zoom your viewpoint in real time—is impressive and adds tremendously to the movie-like feel of the graphics. I could devote several pages to tactical lessons I learned, but some things are best learned the hard way (especially when no lives are really at stake). Here is one hint: Shift the OP view to the least experienced gunner in your platoon and take over for him to increase overall effectiveness of the platoon, as well as protect that individual tank until it gains enough experience to fight on it's own.

Spectrum Holobyte's simulator, Tank, was unavailable in a running format at the time of this writing but I did see a preliminary copy of the manual and some of the graphic stills. The program appears to be quite similar in design to M-1 Tank Platoon although the user interface is different (ie: pull down menus). One additional feature is a head to head modem combat option for either single tank or multiple unit engagements. Judging by past performance, Tank should provide good competition for M-1 Tank Platoon, each attracting its own set of enthusiastic players.

Parting Shots

Computer gamers who seek entertaining diversions in the realm of modern armored warfare, but lack the perseverance to perfect coordinated tactics and the use of combined arms, will find a lot of entertainment in either Abrams Battle Tank or Steel Thunder. Serious students of the military art, as well as those seeking a definitive challenge to their command ability, should rush out and purchase a copy of M-1 Tank Platoon immediately. We hesitate to recommend a product we haven't seen yet, but we suspect that it's a safe bet Spectrum Holobyte's Tank will also provide the realism advanced players seek.

Press Escape.



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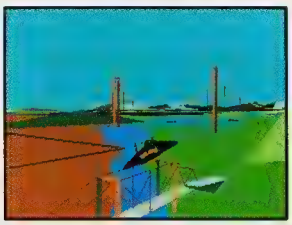
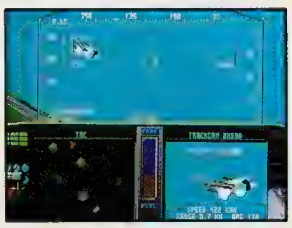
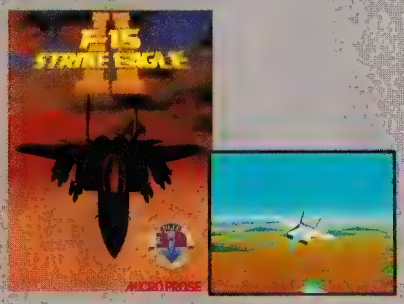
Clandestine Getaway Vehicle: F-19 Stealth Fighter re-creates 250,000 square miles of Libya, Central Europe, the Persian Gulf, and the North Cape of Scandinavia. Real geography is one of the reasons the Software Publishers Association voted it Simulation of the Year.





Armored Getaway Vehicle: M1 Tank Platoon puts you in charge of four Abrams tanks right where they were designed to be used — the rolling countryside of West Germany.



Dogfighting Getaway Vehicle: F-15 Strike Eagle II gives you the Middle East, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf and Libya. Plus, if you have F-19 Stealth Fighter you can transport F-15 II's dogfighting action to Central Europe and the North Cape of Scandinavia.

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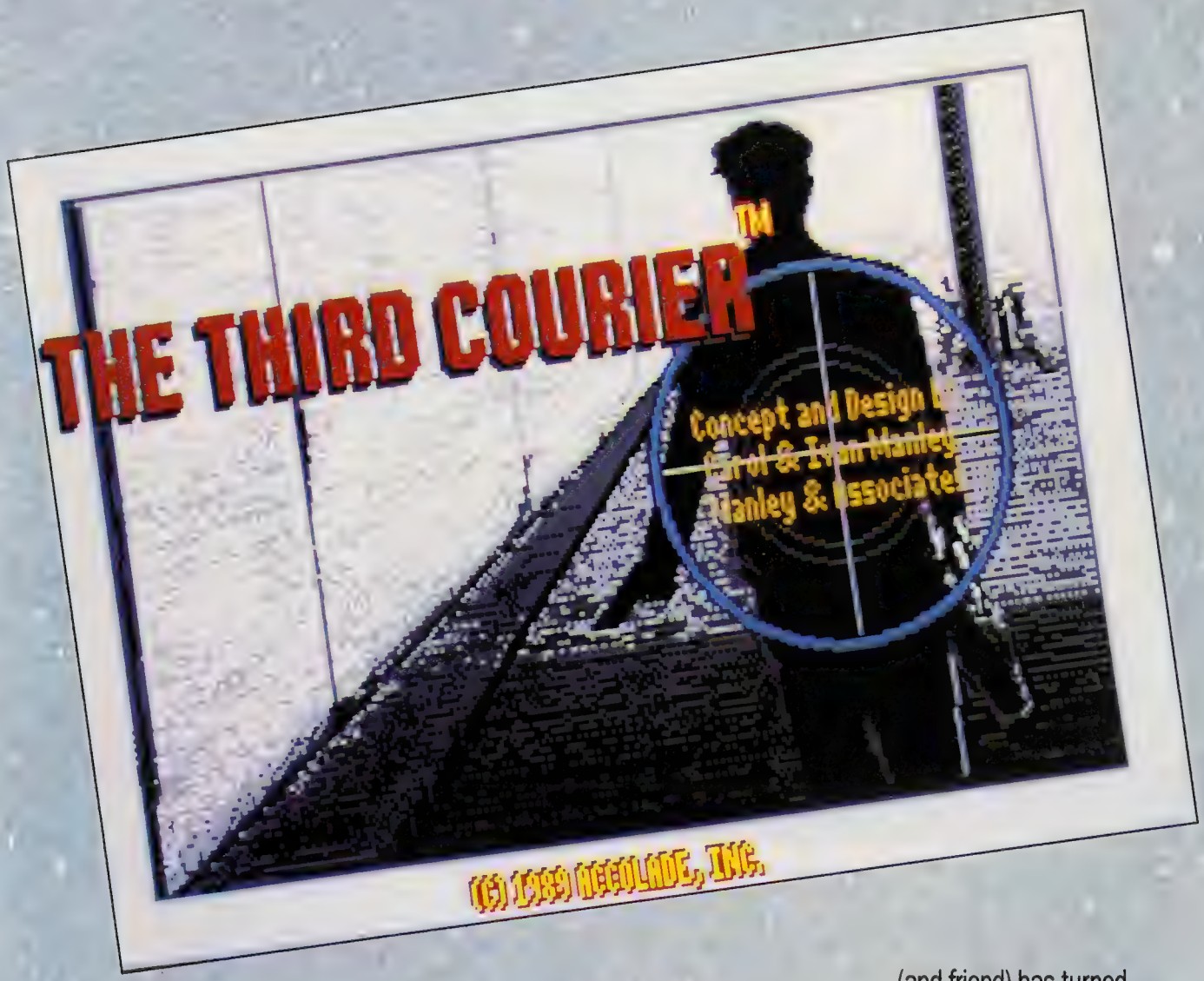
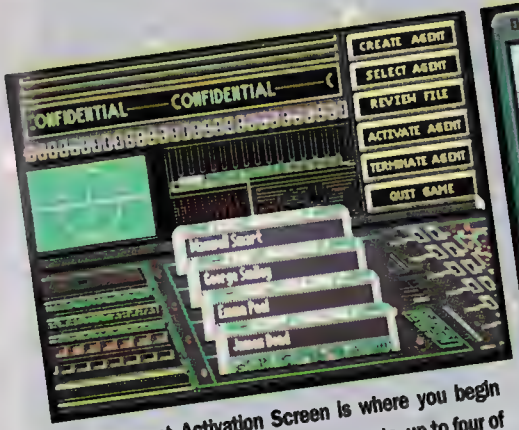
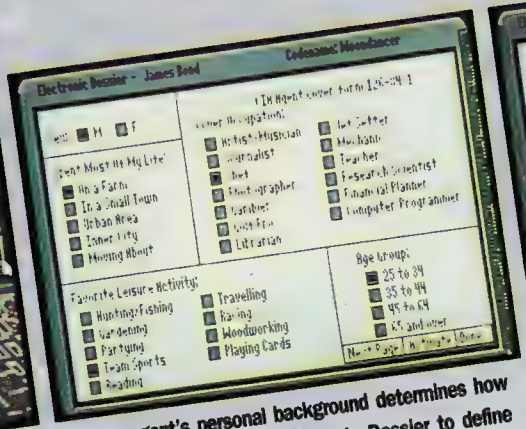


THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE CODE

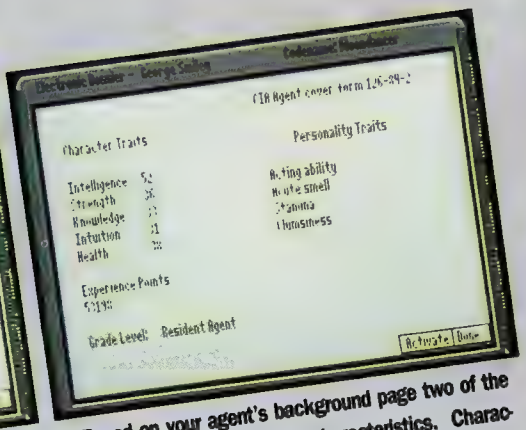
The Third Courier from Accolade takes you to the City of Intrigue, Berlin, and drops you into a murky cloak and dagger arena. As secret agent codename: Moondancer, your assignment is unpleasant but vital. A fellow agent (and friend) has turned. Looks like he's murdered two couriers and stolen a micro chip and a floppy disk that contain secret NATO defense plans. Now The Company has given you 7 days to track him down and retrieve the two items before he sells out. And while you're at it–terminate the villain with extreme prejudice!



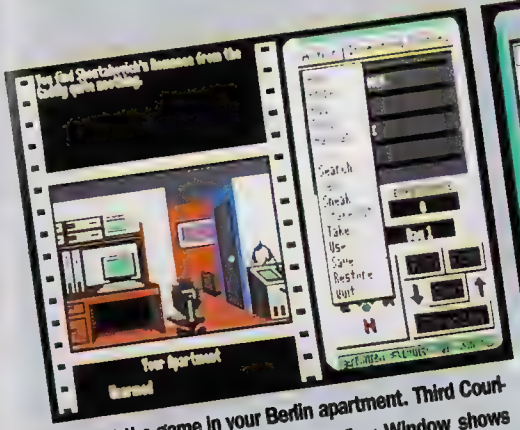
1. The Agent Activation Screen is where you begin your assignment. Create your own agents–up to four of them. You'll probably need them all.



2. Your agent's personal background determines how effective he is. Use the Electronic Dossier to define characteristics for your agent. Don't make the most obvious choices.

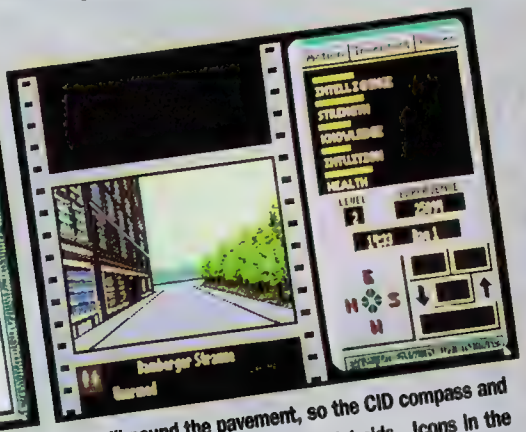


3. Based on your agent's background page two of the ED shows possible traits and characteristics. Characteristics also improve with experience. Start as an Agent and work your way up to Master Spy.

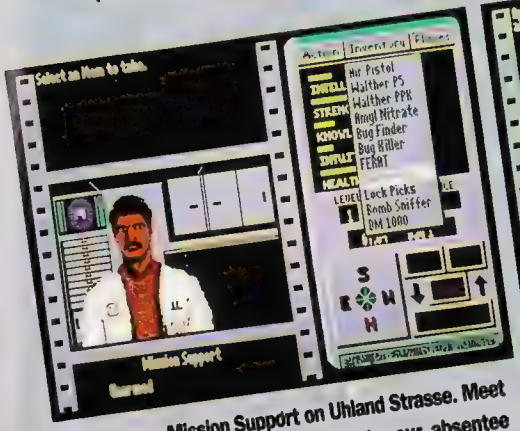


4. Start the game in your Berlin apartment. Third Courier has a four-part interface. The View Window shows the action, the Status box indentifies locations, the Dialog box displays conversation, and the Character Information Display (CID) monitors character traits (health is particularly critical). Return home periodically to check your computer and your answering device for important messages. Oh yeah, don't forget your gun and your passport when you leave.

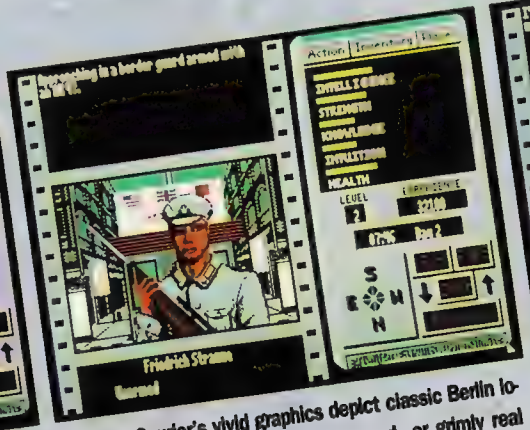
5. The computer is your main communications link to Company HQ. Always read your electronic mail; you may find an essential clue. You can also tap the Company mainframe for identity checks.



6. You'll pound the pavement, so the CID compass and the Berlin street map are essential aids. Icons in the Status box indentify buildings, businesses, even clue-filled restrooms. Hail a cab to save valuable time. The U-Bahn subway is a quick way to cross the Wall into East Berlin. Don't forget your passport.



7. First stop: Mission Support on Uhland Strasse. Meet Daphne, the Doc, Supply, and Nigel, your absentee boss. See Supply on your first visit. The Photo-fax, the FERAT device, and lock picks come in handy.

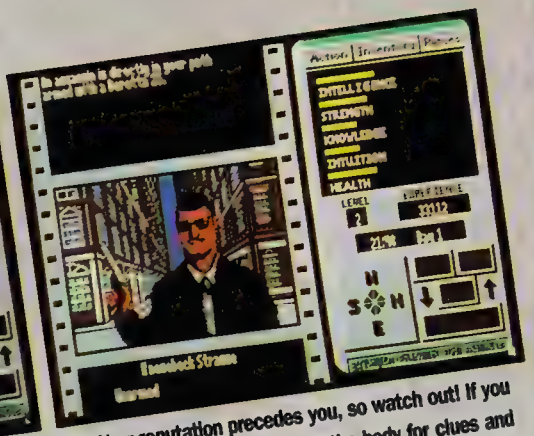


8. Third Courier's vivid graphics depict classic Berlin locales that can be pretty as a postcard...or grimly real like the "official" entrance to East Berlin, Checkpoint Charlie.

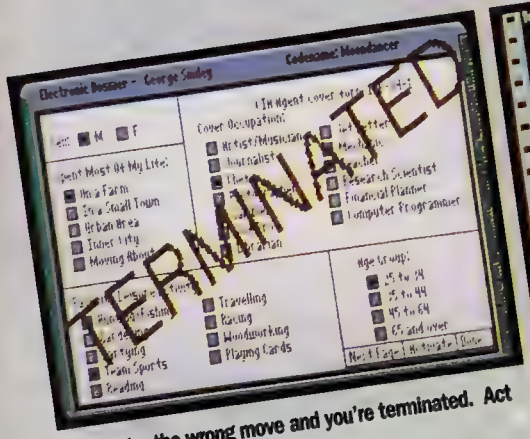
9. Visit beautiful Berlin, meet interesting people, and bribe them. Local merchants may have Black Market gizmos or information to aid your quest.

10. It's a good idea to photo fax everyone you meet. Even a guard at the Charlottenburg Palace may have a secret past.

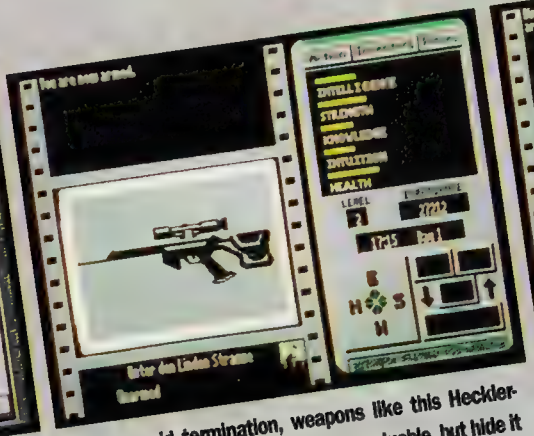
11. The chip's in the Palace, but knowing it's there is just the first step.



12. Your reputation precedes you, so watch out! If you kill before you're killed, search the body for clues and weapons.



13. Make the wrong move and you're terminated. Act smart, be prepared, and save often.



14. To avoid termination, weapons like this Heckler-Koch G3-SG1 submachine gun are invaluable, but hide it in your briefcase when you're on the streets. Supply has both when you earn enough points.

15. Talk to the right people and end up underground. The baddest bad guys live in the aquaduct; they don't care which side wins. The well-dressed agent wears a Mk. 3 bullet-proof vest to this bash.

16. Next, you visit the Russian Embassy, uninvited of course. Bring your Visa Card and some dog biscuits.

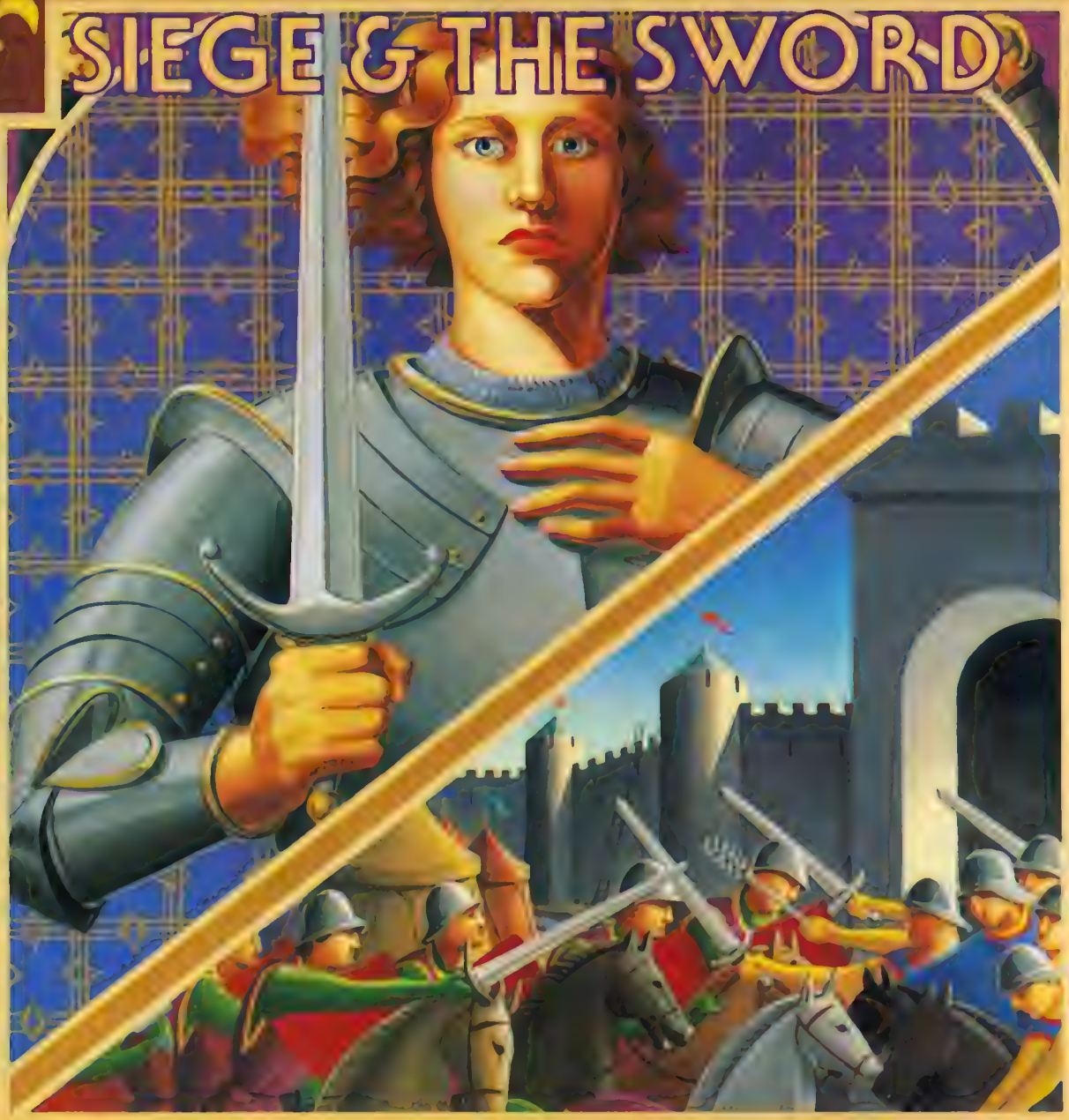
17. Get to the safe house. But is it really? You may find the answer here, but what's the question?

18. Success moves you up in the world of spy versus spy.

Like most adventure role-playing games there are several ways to solve Third Courier's mystery. The easy way is to get Accolade's clue book...

• JOAN OF ARC •

SIEGE & THE SWORD



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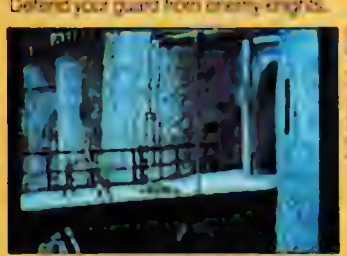

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Falcon fans have something celebrate. A new book by Howard Bornstein reveals new secrets and techniques for flying this complex military simulation. In the following excerpt, taken straight from the book, Mr. Bornstein tells you all you ever needed to know about enemy MiGs.

TURN & BURN

by Howard Bornstein

The MiG-21

The enemy air force is equipped with MiG-21 supersonic jet fighters. The MiG-21 is the most popular fighter plane in the world. There have been more MiG-21s produced and they have been in production longer than any other supersonic fighter in the world. Made by the Mikoyan-Gurye-vich design bureau, the MiG-21 is widely used throughout the world and is considered a capable opponent, even though it was designed almost 25 years ago.

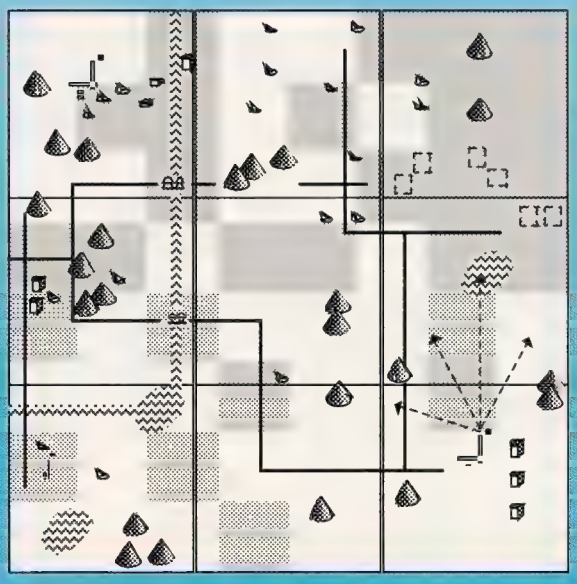
Armament

The MiG-21 is equipped with air-to-air heat-seeking and radar-guided missiles. It carries the AA-2-2 radar-guided Atoll missile as well as the AA-2 heat seeker missile. It is also armed with the GSh-23 30mm cannon. The MiG-21 cannon in Falcon is considerably more accurate than the one on the real MiG-21, which is known for its inaccurate cannons.

How MiGs are created in Falcon

Each MiG is created as a separate individual with his own set of skills and capabilities. When Falcon creates a MiG, it randomly assigns him a rank and a set of two or three favorite air combat maneuvers. The rank can be any rank from 1st Lieutenant up to the rank you are flying at. Some MiGs may be experts at all of the air combat maneuvers. Depending on your distance, altitude, and aspect angle, he may start an air combat maneuver in order to either escape from you or to engage you.

MiGs appear based on various factors. The Falcon world is divided up (as far as the MiG logic is concerned) into 64 sectors (these are different from the 9 sectors on the Falcon map). Each mission has a different set of sector patterns where certain sectors are considered "hot". Based on each mission's pattern, you must fly within a hot sector for a MiG to be created. Not all the sectors are hot, so if you stay out of the hot ones, you will (theoretically) never see a MiG. Unfortunately you have to fly through hot sectors (even if for brief moments) to get to your targets for most missions, so there is always some probability of MiGs appearing. The hot sectors are marked in gray on the mission maps (the figure is the mission map for Black Bandit).



Black Bandit Mission Map.

MiGs are created just outside of your radar range (at about forty miles distance). They appear at random altitudes and the number that may appear is random from one to the maximum number you selected at the start of the mission.

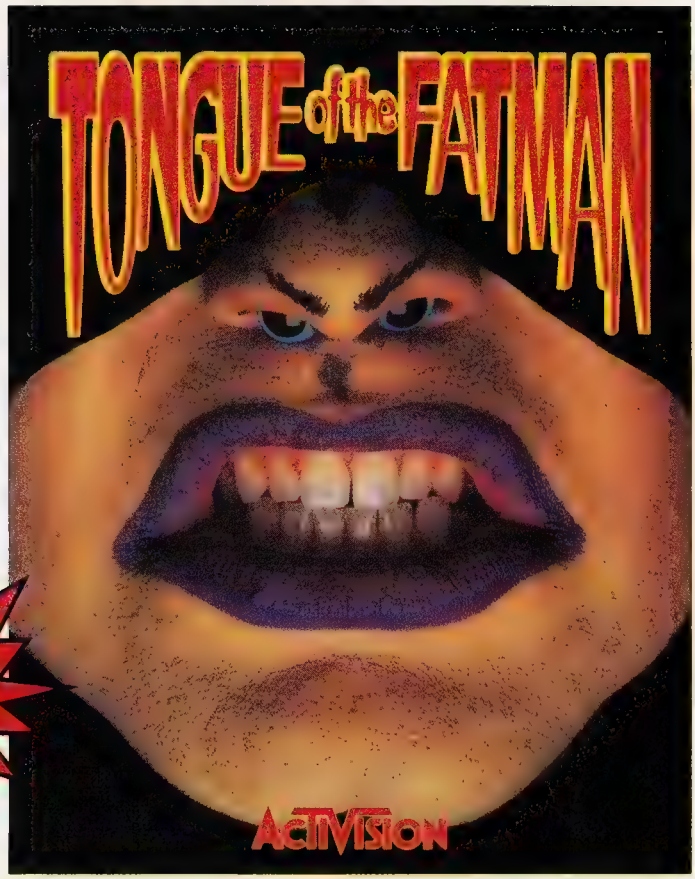
MiGs are created with random fuel and four to six missiles, either radar-guided or heat-seeking, with the probability weighted toward the heat-seekers.

This mimics real life very accurately. You may encounter a MiG at some point in the mission where your fuel and weapons are depleted by a certain amount. It would be unrealistic (and unfair) if every MiG you encountered always had a full tank of gas and six shiny new missiles. Instead, you may run into a MiG that has limited weapons and has been flying around for a while. If you decide to mix it up with him, you may be surprised to see him disengage and head for home after just a few moments of tussling. MiGs will return to their base when they are low on fuel or have used all of their weapons.

They are very sneaky the way they disengage, however. They try to create distance from you just before they leave by starting an air combat maneuver and then breaking from it to run away. They will also try to lure you back with them into enemy territory, particularly over their own SAM sites. Every once in a while a MiG will run away, like it is out of missiles, but it will save one extra missile. If you chase it, it may suddenly turn on you and let you have it. Be forewarned!

MiGs don't actually return to base and land when they run out of weapons or fuel. They just fly off until they are out of radar range and disappear when they are about 45 miles away. If you chased one, it would just keep flying until you ran out of fuel and crashed.

Welcome to the Fight Palace.



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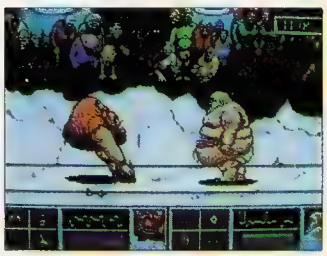

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Avoiding MiGs

Once you are in a hot sector, the chances of a MiG appearing are based on your altitude and time in the sector; the greater the altitude or time, the greater the probability. The chances become even greater if your radar or jamming pod are active.

You lower the chances of a MiG appearing if you fly under 500 feet. This is relatively easy to do in the Amiga/Atari versions, but difficult in the Macintosh and IBM PC versions because the descent rate is exaggerated and you drop very fast. He can still spot you with his look-down radar, but you may gain some advantage flying very low. Incidentally, flying under 500 feet will afford you absolutely no protection from his radar-guided missiles.

Falcon also does not support terrain-masking. This is using the terrain to hide from enemy radar. You could sneak up on a SAM site by approaching it behind a mountain if you could use terrain-masking. It is still fun to fly your missions this way, even if it isn't effective. Also, this will be a feature that will be added to a future version of Falcon, so you might as well start practicing now.

In summary, the best strategy for avoiding MiGs is to avoid flying through a hot sector or to fly low and fast with your radar and jamming pod turned off.

Dog-fight Strategies

The MiGs in Falcon are very intelligent and dangerous adversaries. They will challenge you at each rank and at colonel rank they are extremely difficult to defeat. But the best remedy against a clever enemy is to know as much about him as possible. There are some attributes about the MiG and the way it dog-fights that you can use to your advantage.

You won't have to wait very long for some action once a MiG comes within radar distance of you. Since these are wartime conditions, the MiGs will attack whenever they can. At the higher ranks, you may not know a MiG is around until he fires on you. He can be vectored to you by his own ground radar and you'll never see his radar appear on your threat indicator.

"If I meet a MiG head on and I am headed toward home, I would be unwise to turn and continue to fight unless he is a threat. Assume we are both going about 500 knots at the merge. He has to turn all the way around without losing speed, and then run me down before I get home. After he gets turned around, he will probably be at least 8 nautical miles in trail. Considering he has to get to 3 miles to shoot me (real world), it would take him 2.5 minutes to catch me if he had 120 knots of closure. (Since I would be going the speed of heat, he will have a hard time generating any closure, let alone 120 knots). In that 3 minutes, I am 30 miles closer to home and he is 30 miles farther from home. Since he has much shorter legs (less fuel) than I do, he probably would give up the chase and head home."— Viper*

*Viper is the call sign of an actual F-16 pilot whose comments are quoted throughout the book.

Even if you spot him, you won't get much time to practice tracking and making intercepts, since the MiGs will head directly for you. You do have an opportunity to practice some of these techniques if you play head-to-head with another driver.

The most important aspect about engaging a MiG is to gain control immediately. But don't feel that you have to engage or stay engaged with a MiG under every circumstance. The best strategy for staying alive is to evaluate the situation, and if you don't have an advantageous situation quickly, to disengage from the MiG. Disengaging means to break off attack or contact with the MiG and remove yourself to a safe position. From there you can either leave for your own base, or re-engage when the circumstances are more in your favor.

Your afterburner is often very useful in disengaging, because you usually want to put some quick distance between yourself and the MiG. Your burner gives you the juice to move away.

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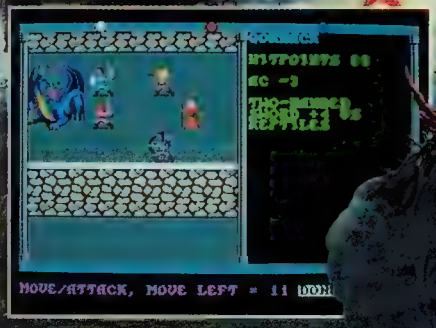

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SIM CITY/ POPULOUS

By Rusel DeMaria

Back in 1887, Lord Acton told Bishop Creighton that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. And I say, what fun it is to be corrupted. I mean, in a world as complex as ours, with all the aggravations and obstacles of daily life, haven't you ever wanted to just TAKE CONTROL!? But, as a friend of mine used to say at least once a week, "If wishes were horses, we'd all be riding." Wishes can come true. The fairy godmother of this fable, however, is your local software dealer who can put you in the ultimate driver's seat with two of the best titles of 1989–SimCity and Populous.

Design Your City

Experience all the trials and tribulations of a city planner in Maxis Software's SimCity. Already a phenomenal hit on the Macintosh, the PC version is finally here, and it's well worth the wait. In SimCity, you get to make many of the decisions you wish you could make in your own home town. For instance, how many roads do you think you need? Or what about mass transit? What ratio of residential, commercial, and industrial zoning do you need to build the healthiest population? Can you balance industrial pollution with the need for jobs and productivity? And how does all this fit into a limited city budget?

The questions never end, but, fortunately, SimCity gives you a chance to explore these and many other issues as often as you like. Begin with a piece of empty land, or start with an existing city and see if you can manage it well enough to make it thrive and the population grow.

Early decisions involve constructing roads, clearing and zoning land, and building a power network (power station and power lines to each zoned area). After you see some expansion, you'll eventually want to build a seaport and even an airport. But use smart planning, or you're likely to have planes crashing on top of your high rises!

Your city is populated by 'Sims'–artificially intelligent people who respond well to good city planning, and who mostly vote with their feet when things get bad. In other words, they leave. However, you get an annual report that tells you how much better (or how much worse) you're doing compared to last year and what the Sims' current major complaints are. You determine the yearly budget: set the tax rate and make the allocations to various city services such as police, fire departments, roads, and more.

If conditions are favorable, the Sims build automatically. Smoking factories, high-rise appartments, hospitals, churches, and office buildings all spring up as if by magic. Roads fill with SIMulated traffic, boats wander the waterways, planes and traffic helicopters fly overhead, and a train chugs along your mass transit tracks. Or, if you don't do a good job, you'll likely see nothing but slums, warehouses, and streets in need of repair. In EGA mode, the graphics are colorful and fun to watch. There's a fascination you'll feel with your growing metropolis.

Factors like transportation, pollution, land values (which affect your tax base), and many more contribute to your success or failure. If you think you're doing pretty well, save your city at any time.

To give you plenty of feedback, Mr. Mayor, you can view various informational maps. For instance, you can view the power grid to find breaks in service. Or view the police and fire protection areas to see if you need more police or fire departments. Check out your roads, land values, population, and crime on the various maps.

Remember, everything you do costs money. And don't forget Murphy's Law. There are plenty of things that can go wrong. Natural disasters like earthquakes, fires, plane crashes, and floods can occur (though you can turn these features off, if you prefer). It's a real test of your planning ability to see if you can clean up after a major disaster, though. In fact, the game comes with several pre-built cities, including famous cities–complete with their own disasters. My favorite is Tokyo which has Godzilla. In this version, however, I have to admit some sympathy with the great beast. That's because this Godzilla only attacks areas of pollution. Maybe she's doing us a favor!

It's very difficult to build a profitable city of any great size. Fortunately, there's a way to 'cheat.' If you press the Shift key and type 'FUND' from the city edit map, you'll gain some additional dough. Call it a bond issue. Or embezzlement. Whatever you call it, it helps. After all, you can blow a lot of cash trying to keep up with the demands of your Sim Citizens.

SimCity is one of the most intelligent and well-conceived programs of the past year, and, although it lacks some details necessary for real city planning, it's enough of a simulation that I wish we had had it thirty, fifty, or even eighty years ago. Maybe our cities would be healthier if the people planning them had played Sim City first.

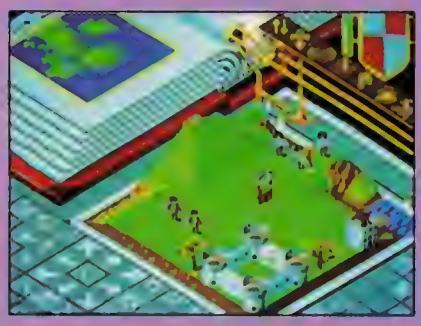
SimCity (512K; CGA/Hercules/EGA(640K) /Tandy; $49.95).

Vengeance Is Mine

If being the mayor and chief planner of a city is too down-to-earth for you, don't despair. You can really get delusory in Populous.

Ever think about playing God? Sure, it's sacrilegious, but in Populous it's all in good fun as you play one of two warring deities trying to control an entire world. Among your weapons in the titanic struggle: earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, military knights of conquest, and, yes, there's even Armageddon!

As in SimCity, your world is populated by semi-intelligent creatures called Walkers. There are two types–Good and Evil (yours and your opponent's). Your goal is to help those who worship you while making life unbearable for the others. Your main tool is the ability to raise and lower land. Flat land encourages your Walkers to settle, build, and multiply. Your power is measured by the amount of worship you receive, so the more people you have, the more 'mana' you have. Without mana, you're nothing. With it, you're a god to be feared.



The Populous screen is unique. Each world appears as a page in the Book of Worlds. You position a square over part of the current world to view and manipulate that area in the Closeup Map. Icons let you control the action. This game plays best with a mouse, although the keyboard is also satisfactory. But with a mouse, you can make quick changes by clicking on the icons and by raising and lowering sections of land (with the right and left mouse buttons).

An Information Shield displays various bits of data about your world, including the power of a selected character or settlement and the relative level of civilization of a population. Other options let you position a shield on a particular character or location, zoom to the shield, zoom to your leader (who carries your holy relic or ankh), move the Papal Magnet (which is a static symbol of your power), and more. You can also tell your people to settle and multiply, gather together and settle, attack the enemy and settle, or go to the Papal Magnet.

Whenever a Walker encounters another Walker from the same side, they merge into a single, more powerful Walker. For instance, using the Go to Papal Magnet command, you can make all your Walkers converge, creating one very powerful Walker (usually the Leader who carries the ankh). Now, if you have enough mana, you can change that leader into a knight, a powerful destructive missionary who will carry the truth to your enemies–in the shape of a sword. Knights are powerful destroyers who keep going until they are killed. A very strong knight cuts a large swath of destruction through your enemy's settlements. And you can have as many knights as you can create!

By the way, if a Good Walker encounters an Evil Walker, they fight, and the more powerful one prevails.

There are lots of options in Populous. You can turn on or off any of the god-like powers. Also, you can make water deadly (so any Walker who falls in water dies), or just harmful (in which case Walkers can escape floods and other water traps). Many other options add variety to the game. In fact, you can even create your own terrain, place Walkers where you want them at the beginning, change the mana of either god, and create all the other aspects of a Populous world.

For the maximum challenge, try the Conquest mode–a sort of divine tournament. Populous comes with hundreds of pre-set worlds, and, in Conquest, you must complete each one in order to advance to the next. The computer determines the settings and options; then, it's up to you. If you become too dependent on one technique or strategy, you'll have trouble in Conquest mode. However, if you're clever, create lots of land for your people, and play your cards right, you can win even at level 342 or above! But it isn't easy.

For a more human challenge, let your friends play god, too, in a head-to-head mode via modem. Hook up on-line and see if you can beat a human god. You'll find your friends can be the toughest opponents of all.

Populous is one of the most rewarding games I've ever played. Maybe it's just a personal thing, but I never seem to get tired of playing a god. There are so many different ways to play and strategies to employ that the game never gets old or repetitive. And the high res graphics (especially in VGA mode) are spectacular.

I waited a long time for Populous to come to the PC. It was available for a long time in Europe on the Amiga, where it was a monster hit. Now, at last, PC users can take the path to divine entertainment.

Populous (512K; VGA/EGA/Tandy 16/CGA (384K), $49.95).

Sword of Aragon

By John S. Manor

The Duke of Aladda has died. Now it's up to you to restore the land to its former glory days. Not an easy task. The land is infested with roaming armies of orcs, giants, and other monsters. And some evil rulers seem to think the time is ripe for conquest. You must act boldly and quickly to gain the emperor's throne.

Sword of Aragon is a strategy game from SSI that combines swords and sorcery with economic and political decision-making. As in other fantasy/strategy games you first pick a main character to lead your armies into battle across the land. He may be a warrior, knight, ranger, priest, or mage. Each type of leader has different abilities and advantages. For instance, being a warrior reduces the cost of infantry by 50%. Similarly, a ranger reduces the cost of bowmen while a mage may be useful for softening up the opposition with spells.

You can play in easy, average, or expert modes, and save multiple games (or the same game incrementally). Most of the action occurs on a scrolling world map of Aragon, until you enter combat with a closeup view of the battle.

The manual suggests that you begin with the Standard Unit Setup for your army. This provides a useful mix of mobile (and hard-hitting) cavalry, infantry and bowmen. Later, you may wish to design your own army.

All characters and units gain ability levels through experience in training and combat. Higher level units and characters can use better weapons, such as a Compound bow for bowmen or a Pike for infantry, and are generally more effective in combat. High level spellcasters cast more useful spells: a powerful mage may destroy buildings with a Quake spell or Teleport your army in an instant (marching cross-country is sooo time consuming). Mages can also open a Gate to let a Demon unit fight for them.

Examine all your units in detail to see their hit points, armor class, weapons, levels, number of men in the unit, spells available (to spellcasters), and more. Or change a unit's weapons, armor, and number of men, as long as you have the money and they have a high enough ability level.

Combat occurs when some of your units are attacked by marauding orcs, giants, trolls, or another human army, or when you choose to attack them. Order your units to move and attack based on their number of movement points, and control one or several stacked units at a time. Move in a normal or forced march, entrench units, cast spells, get supplies, or attack. Optionally, let the computer take over for one turn and just select a general strategy to follow: Fanatic, Attack, Moderate, or Defense. I usually like to command my units, since I enjoy the tactical combat situations. I found it is best to hit the enemy with bowmen and spells first to soften them up. Then clean up with infantry or cavalry charges.

Sword of Aragon is not all clashing swords and magical incantations, though. Strategy is the most crucial part of the game. As the Duke's heir, you govern cities as well as lead your armed forces. You must add other cities through conquest (or liberation) and make your armies more powerful by conscripting soldiers. The economy provides gold from taxes, which you use to train soldiers, buy arms, armor, horses, leaders, and mercenaries, and to set up new units. Positioning your cursor over one of your cities allows you to check its status. You get information on population, morale, loyalty, health, tax rate, income, number of recruits available, and more. You also see your overall current wealth, month's income and score. With your wealth you can develop the city's resources (agriculture, trade, mining, lumber etc.) and hopefully create more income in the coming months. You may also adjust the tax rate from 0 to 80%.

Sword of Aragon comes with a manual, a disk and a map of Aragon (which is used for off-disk copy protection). The manual provides some Aladdan history, a glossary, and appendices on weapons and spells.

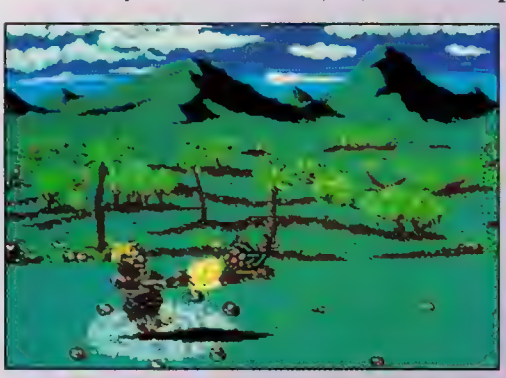
I have to recommend Sword of Aragon for those computerists who love wargames, as I do, especially those who also enjoy fantasy and sorcery themes. This is not an easy game to master. I spent a lot of time building up my armies with only moderate success. Yet, I enjoyed every minute of it. Sword of Aragon is an absorbing, complex game that satisfies with its strategic depth (economically and militarily) and tactical action. I give Sword of Aragon the highest marks for playability and value for your dollar.

Sword of Aragon (384K; HGC/ CGA/ Tandy/EGA, 384K, $39.95)

Caveman Ugh-Lympics

By Adam Sherwin

Have you competed in any good dinosaur races lately? You certainly have, if you've played Caveman Ugh-Lympics from Electronic Arts. In addition to the ever popular Dinosaur Race, Ugh-Lympics has an assortment of Flintstone-age events. These include the controversial Mate-Toss, the brain-jarring Clubbing, the incendiary Firemaking, the death-defying Dino Vault, and the ferociously dangerous Sabertooth Tiger Race.



First, choose your event. In the Mate Toss, use keyboard or joystick to swing your mate in ever quickening circles, then let go as your sweetheart goes flying into the dust. How romantic! Or, for the boxer in all of us, try Clubbing, which combines pure strength and agility with– wait a minute! That's all it takes! I never knew hitting someone over the head with a tree could be so much fun! Yes, Clubbing may be simple, but it offers more than its share of stone age enjoyment.

Next on the list of ancient pastimes is the Dino Vault. Use timing, speed, strength, and smarts to propel yourself over a hungry lizard of mammoth proportions.

The Dinosaur Race is Electronic Arts' version of the Run for the Roses. In the Saber Tooth Tiger Race, you must dodge cactuses, other cavemen, and, of course, the ever-present saber-toothed feline. The last, and probably best, event is Firemaking. Quickly rub two sticks together (with your joystick via the screen), all the while avoiding your opponent's blasts–from his/her club–at your head. Is this why matches were invented?

Every sequence in Caveman Ugh-Lympics features vivd graphics such as brightly hued cacti, short squat cavemen complete with bristly beards, cavewomen that'll make you appreciate the contemporary female anatomy, and even leaping lizards (No, Little Orphan Annie doesn't make a cameo.)

Attractive screen displays (CGA, EGA, VGA) and nonstop action are to be expected in a game of this type. In addition, the brainpower invested in this game is obvious and especially rare in these days of high-priced, not always interesting games. Give Electronic Arts credit, they came up with an unusual idea and their programmers were able to pull it off.

As good as Ugh-Lympics is, however, there are a few drawbacks–for instance, some of the scenery doesn't change from event to event and although the cavemen and cavewomen are quite cute, their movements could be much more fluid.

Despite a few small flaws, ingenious ideas and action-packed entertainment team up to make Caveman Ugh-Lympics perfect Neanderthal competition.

Caveman Ugh-Lympics (CGA, EGA, VGA $29.95.)

RoboMan

Exciting Arcade Action!

RoboMan is a high-speed action arcade game in which you pop balloons to acquire points while moving through 50 challenging levels of difficulty. Use jumps, super jumps, and springboards to reach strategically placed balloons and platforms.

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Operating on IBM PC and true compatibles, **RoboMan** puts you in control of the action.

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MANHUNTER: San Francisco

By James Trunzo

"I left my heart in San Francisco" can be taken quite literally in this gruesome sequel to Manhunter: New York. The alien Orb invaders have migrated to the West Coast, taking over the City by the Bay. You–in an undercover role–must assume the identity of a recently deceased Manhunter (you land on him with your spaceship!) and work to free your fellow humans from the tyranny of the Orbs.

Picking up where its predecessor left off (though no prior knowledge is required), Manhunter: SF is a sprawling graphic adventure game–on eight 5.25" disks or three 3.5" disks–that boasts several improvements while retaining the best elements of the first game.

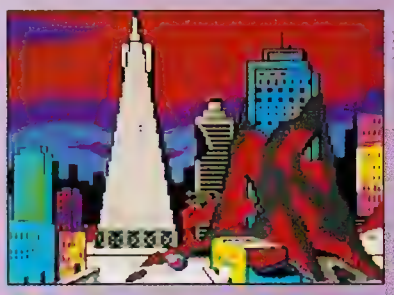
Unlike Manhunter: NY, where your loyalties were tested early on, you have clearly relinquished your position as a pawn-like Manhunter, forced to betray his own kind in the service of the alien Orbs. The fact that you are now "undercover" adds considerable intrigue and excitement.

A welcome change for those who hate arcade elements in graphic adventure games, is the ability to select difficulty levels for the arcade sequences. By setting the difficulty level to EASY, even the most bumbling arcader can quickly make it through these interludes and get on with the adventure itself.

Manhunter: SF is impressive, featuring more than 250 detailed and realistic graphics. Whether you're looking at a bird's eye view of the city or staring at a gut-wrenching close-up of a mutilated corpse, you'll be amazed at the clarity of the pictures and the smoothness of the animation. And Manhunter: SF features more special visual effects, varying perspectives, and different points of view than did Manhunter: NY.

The no-typing interface that made Manhunter: NY such a delight to play remains. Use either the computer keyboard or an optional joystick to manipulate the game; you never have to type a word.

The on-screen cursor changes shape as it travels over the various screens–each new shape indicating a special function. When the cursor becomes a magnifying glass, for example, zoom in on important details by hitting the ENTER key or pushing a joystick button. When it takes the shape of an arrow, use the same method to move in the direction indicated.



It's fun to travel through famous sections of San Francisco, albeit a somewhat futuristic and depressing version. All the famous landmarks and locations are there: Coit Tower, the Transamerica Pyramid, Fisherman's Wharf, Chinatown....

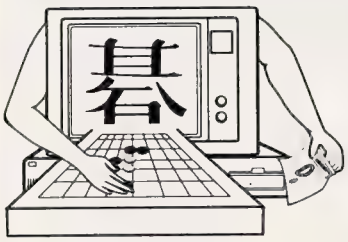
Of course, Coit Tower is spewing a putrid red gas, the Pyramid is being covered by a mysterious mound of red dirt, and Ghiradelli Square is pretty much a pile of bricks...but that's all part of the mystery.

The original Manhunter introduced a bizarre theme that caught the attention of many game players. Manhunter: SF also contains the darkly humorous, lightly satirical, and always creepy horror elements that made the first game a cult favorite. It's probably worth noting that, largely due to the stomach-turning realism of the graphic, younger players might be bothered by this game. However, Manhunter: SF's overall theme is definitely a positive one in which good overcomes evil.

Whether tracking down the bloody killer from New York, battling Chinatown ninjas, or trying to outwit "fellow" Manhunters, you're bound to enjoy this sometimes humorous and sometimes frightening adventure. And even if you save San Francisco, who knows where the Orbs might show up next? We all know how Sierra On-Line likes trilogies.

Manhunter: San Francisco (256K;Tandy/EGA/CGA/MCGA/VGA/Hercules; $49.95).

Prepare to meet your NEMESIS™



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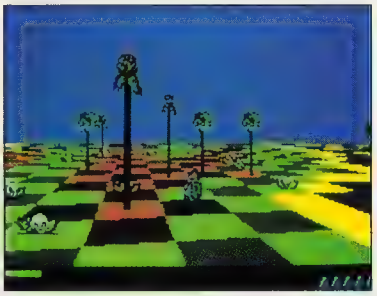
Too Little Too Late?

By R.J. Ehrman

It's a pity. The little bit of remaining land mass is rapidly being contaminated, and, if you don't do your job, it will be overrun by Viral Trees, Eco-Eggs, and Sand Pods (not to mention Neuromancers and B-900 Banshees). So hop into your hovercraft and get going. You can still save the remaining 9,999 scattered land masses from final death.



Archipelagos, from Fanfare (a division of Britannica Software), is an interesting strategy/action game with a message. Your task is to find the remaining radioactive nodes, deactivate them, and absorb their energy. Then find the obelisk and deactivate it. You must do this on each of the first 100 archipelagos in order; thereafter, you can choose any of the nearly 10,000 areas.

Once you destroy all of the radioactive nodes in an archipelago, you have only 90 seconds to find and destroy the obelisk. That's where the strategy comes in. You must work fast, but efficiently, planning your moves ahead whenever possible. Save a node close to the obelisk for last.

The Viral Trees are a hazard because they move, decimating the land around them. You can reclaim the land, one square at a time, but at a cost of precious energy. Also, to make things more complex, each node must be connected by a land mass to the obelisk. You may have to build land bridges to complete the level.

Neuromancers are metaphysical beings that you'll have to avoid. Banshees are remnants of the former occupants' attempts at clean up. They try to clean up everything–including you and your hovercraft! Even the nasty plant life, the Viral Trees, Eco-Eggs, and all, are remnants of a time gone by. Originally intended to clean up environmental pollution, they have now become the prime polluters (since there's no animal life left).

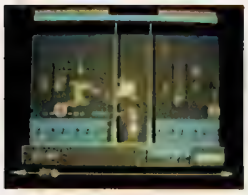
The controls of this game are very simple. You move in stages, positioning a crosshair in the desired direction, then pressing a button on keyboard or mouse. You can pan your viewpoint in 360 degrees or use special keys to reverse directions instantly.

Each succeeding archipelago consists of new challenges and traps. You have to explore quickly, plan carefully, and, at the higher levels, react instantly to various threats. This is the kind of game you will want to play again and again–assuming you like it at all. Though the story line is complex, the game is simple and easy to play. You'll probably take your task seriously and try to clean up yet one more corner of a polluted world before you rest.

Archipelagos (256K; CGA/MCGA/TGA/EGA/VGA (384K) $39.95). ■

Circle 32 on Reader Service card.

His mummy don't dance and his daddy don't rock and roll.



Horus isn't a happy guy. You see, his father, Osiris, was murdered. His mother, Isis, just lays around the pyramid, grieving. And evil Uncle Set — who's caused all the problems — has challenged him to a fight to the death. It's the original family feud — Egyptian style. And it's all in The Eye of Horus™. A brand new game from Fanfare™ — based on Gods and legends as described in ancient Egyptian mythology. Set has ripped Osiris's corpse into seven pieces and hid them in a dark forbidden tomb deep below the scorching Sahara sands. Your task is to help Horus find the remains, and avenge his father's death. But first Horus must search the dark catacombs for weapons and sacred amulets to aid him in battle. And he'll need all the help he can get. Because in the final confrontation, Set will turn into a dragon to destroy him. Self mapping arcade adventure. State-of-the-art animation. High resolution graphics. The Eye of Horus. An exciting new game for the MS-DOS, Amiga, and Atari ST systems. Look for it at your local software store. Or, call us at 800/572-2272 (in CA: 415/546-1866). LOGOTRON RECREATION

It's no cruise down the Nile. In fact, it's downright ungodly.

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THE MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS-Part II

Broderbund

Karateka

1 How do I proceed past the gate in Karateka?

2 Have Ancient Art of War and Ancient Art of War at Sea been upgraded since they first came out?

3 Is it possible to keep someone from knowing you are playing Star Wars?

Koei

Nobunaga's Ambition

1 What is the best strategy at the beginning of the game?

2 What is the best tax rate?

3 Where do I put most of my military strength?

Romance of The Three Kingdoms

4 How can I best equip my troops?

5 I'm having trouble establishing a strong position early in the game. What do I do?

6 What do I do if I get an enemy general to defect?

Genghis Khan

7 What is the best way to organize my army?

8 How do I allocate my men?

9 How do I build up my population?

Cinemaware

Rocket Ranger

1 I never have enough time to complete my mission before the Nazi's take over. How can I get more time?

Krystal

2 I keep getting killed when I go to Magno and I have everything!

Deathbringer

3 My character keeps getting killed for no reason. How come?

4 Am I supposed to help the ghost in the tower? I can't find his bones.

5 How am I supposed to defeat the Assassin Chief?

Darkside

6 How can I slow the game down?

7 Where is the fourth crystal?

Mindcraft

The Magic Candle

1 How do I find the dungeon Dermagud and how do I get in?

2 Where do I find the ship captain in Port Avur and how do I get him to take me sailing?

3 How do I wake up the gods and how do I raise my character's statistics?

4 How do I find teleportal locations and their combinations?

5 What and where is Vocha?

6 How do I get into the dungeon under the King's Castle?

7 What are the lever houses and what do they do?

8 Who are the "eleven maidens"?

9 How do I get into Delkona, the gate guard won't let me in?

10 What is Sherro's High Call?

11 Where can I find Somona?

Lucasfilm

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade

Venice/Catacombs

1 Which slab in the library do I break to get into the catacombs?

2 How do I get through the grating to the casket?

3 How do I open the door where the skulls are?

Castle Brunwald/Germany

4 How do I unlock the grey uniform?

5 How do I talk my way past the guard on the second floor at the foot of the stairs?

6 How do I get past Biff the Nazi on the third floor of the castle?

7 I keep getting beaten up. How do I get my health back?

8 How do I unlock the door to the room where Henry's being held?

9 We're all tied up. How do we escape now?

10 I can't afford to buy tickets. How do I get on the Zeppelin?

11 What's to do on the Zeppelin?

12 How do I get past all the checkpoint guards?

Iskenderun

13 How do I make Indy kneel in the right spot to pass the Breath of God trial in the temple?

14 How do I get across the chasm at the Path of God?

[illegible]

15 How do I light up dark rooms?

16 How do I win the lotto?

17 How do I get to the Bermuda Triangle?

18 How do I open the door with the three buttons on Mars?

19 How do I get the other crystal shard out of the statue in the temple in Mexico City?

20 How do I fuse the crystal shards together?

21 How do I get Zak to Mars?

[illegible]

22 How do I open the safe above Nurse Edna's room?

23 How do I fix the wires in the attic?

24 How do I open the inner door to the Sekrit Lab?

TOP SECRET: PSSST...ALL THE ANSWERS

Broderbund

1 The gate works on an electric eye system. To proceed past the gate, you need to walk as close as possible to it without tripping the electric eye. Next, kick or punch through the gate threshold. This should cause the gate to close. If it does not do so, take another step closer and kick or punch again. Do not wait until the gate resets or you will be killed as you go through the threshold. Go through the gate as it is rising again.

2 Both programs now support EGA 16-color and Tandy 16-color graphics modes. The programs do not have disk copy protection, but require identification of items from the manual during start-up. Both can now be used from a hard disk without requiring a key disk, and both programs come in 5.25 and 3.5 inch formats.

3 Yes! The "boss" key is F4 which places a fake spreadsheet page on your screen. To return to the game, highlight the Quit command and press Return.

Koei

Nobunaga's Ambition

1 Patience is incredibly important. Striking out immediately is the surest way to defeat. Take time to build peasant loyalty, ideally into the high 100's-1000's. Your economy should be evenly ditributed, so that land value, town value, and flood control or dams are around the same level.

2 The most effective tax level is 49%. Change to this at the start of the game, and then give gold by summer. This will give you a strong tax rate without destroying peasant loyalty.

3 Concentrate strength in the first three army units.

Romance of The Three Kingdoms

4 Equip your troops with metal weapons.

5 Expand quickly into many provinces during early scenarios. Even if you can't hold them, you can use their materials. Each province will also give you an additional command to perform.

6 If you get a general to defect to you in battle, be certain to use retreat to get him out. You have to build his loyalty before you can trust him. DO NOT let him guard the rice–he may give it away, and the battle will be over.

Genghis Khan

7 Set the cavalry unit to zero.

8 Put at least 70% of your men in food production and most of the balance in town.

9 Make as many children as possible.

Cinemaware

Rocket Ranger

1 The key to success in this game is to utilize your agents effectively. Infiltrate, then organize resistance in as many countries as possible. This will keep the Nazi efficiency low (a must for success) and you will also find rocket parts faster. Hint: Stay alert once you make it to the moon. The evil Nazi's have a surprise in store for Rocket Ranger.

Krystal

2 Don't go to Magno unless you have the following items: a) 100 strength points: Add strength by swordfighting and eating grelge. Aunt Polly can help with her multipep pills, but like all drugs, they exact a hidden price–40 psychic points. Giving charity to those less fortunate than you usually adds to your sense of well-being. b) Psychabsorber: The only

reason for going to Glysta. c) Belt of Celestial Sisters: Summon Malvalla only after following the pirate ship through the ring. You should be ready to go to Magno at this point. Hint: If you don't speak to each of the following people while you are in the palace, you will have to begin the game again: Nedrod, King Narda, and Princess Feydle Beydle. Don't leave until you have something from each person.

3 It is important to keep track of your character's health, and make sure you have steady supply of food.

4 No. It is a distraction.

5 You must have the cloak of the elves. If the Elf-Lord will not give it to you voluntarily, you must take it by force.

6 Disable three or four ECD's immediately to slow the timer down.

7 To find the fourth crystal, enter the second section of the building in Regulus and shoot the axe. Go through the hatch and shoot the cube. You will then see the fourth crystal.

1 The dungeon entrance is located in the Uberion Mountains near the western shore of Lake Brelleht. The words to get into Dermagud can be learned from Bordal in the Port Avur tavern. Ask him about "Dermagud".

2 Captain Garlin (in Port Avur) appears in the tavern about 18:00 in the evening as do most of the ship captains in the game. To find out when the captain will appear in a specific tavern, ask the innkeeper about "Captain." To set sail on a ship, ask the captain about " Passage." Hint: If your charisma is not high enough to talk to someone, (B)uy a drink and then (O)ffer it to them. A little wine will loosen many tight tongues.

3 The words to wake up the gods are inscribed on the altar of their appropriate temple located elsewhere (the locations can be learned from the monks by asking them about "Temples"). Remember, to (U)se a lens to read the words. After waking a god (by chanting his appropriate words), he will raise your maximum limit on Strength, Dexterity, Agility, and Stamina. To raise the current limit (if currently below the maximum) of Strength, Dexterity, or Agility, drink from an apropriate fountain in the dungeons. Stamina can be increased to its maximum by sleeping, or by potions.

4 The Teleportal chambers are located in various dungeons (like Dermagud), the Teleportal houses are located above ground in various places. The combinations can be learned by talking to wizards and asking about "Teleportals."

5 As explained by the orcs in the Port Avur jail, Vocha is an orc dungeon on the Isles of Ice. This is where Thorin's Hammer was taken to (it was stolen from the dwarves). Hint: To get into the Jail in Port Avur you must get a jail pass from the city guard. How about offering him gold? Another Hint: Return the Hammer to the dwarvan council in Soldain. Remember to visit the Island of Kuskunn to visit the temple of Nexis (the Sun god) before seeing him in Vocha.

6 It is called Meardom and you can get in to it by seeing Beratt in the council chambers. Ask him about "Meardom" and he will let you in. For background information, ask the Port Avur librarian about "Meardom."

7 The party must be split so that at least one person is left in each of the three lever houses. Pulling the levers simultaneously, by pulling in one, then switching to next party, will cause something to happen. Hint: Approach Bay of Sunken Isle after pulling levers.

8 The Elven maidens are located in three different locations in the game and they each know a magic 'Song' that they can sing for you. After singing the song, your Speed in the game is increased by one. Each maiden has a different song...for example...the eleven maiden in Little Phen (on Shendy) is located near the river, her song appropratly is the "River Song."

9 The guards don't like strangers, so you need to become their friend; (O)ffer them gold to win their acceptance.

10 Go to the library in Keof (Shendy) and ask the librarian about "Sherro's High Call." The words to Sherro's High Call may be learned from the elves in Theldair (Gilondo in particular).

11 She is normally located in the Queen's court in Theldair, but it is learned that she has been taken captive in the dungeon Bedangidar (in the Bedangidar Mountains).

Lucasfilm

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade

Venice/ Catacombs

1 Have Indy look at his father's Grail Diary. In the correct room, when he looks at the stained glass window, Indy will say, "It looks JUST like the one in my father's diary!" Look at the inscriptions on the pillars flanking the window. If, for example, the text in the grail diary said, "If ye would enter, follow the second on the left," have Indy use the metal post on the slab represented by the second Roman numeral in the inscription on the left-hand pillar.

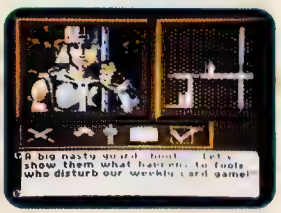
2 You'll be opening the grating from inside the casket room. Use the wine bottle (the lovers "aren't finished with their fine wine?" Have Indy look at the wine bottle, then pick it up) with the pool of water, then use it on the mud encrusted torch. When Indy pulls the torch, he'll drop through a trapdoor in to another level of the catacombs.

3 Read the notes in Henry's diary from left to right. A note on the top line of the musical staff corresponds to the leftmost skull. The second line down corresponds to the second skull from

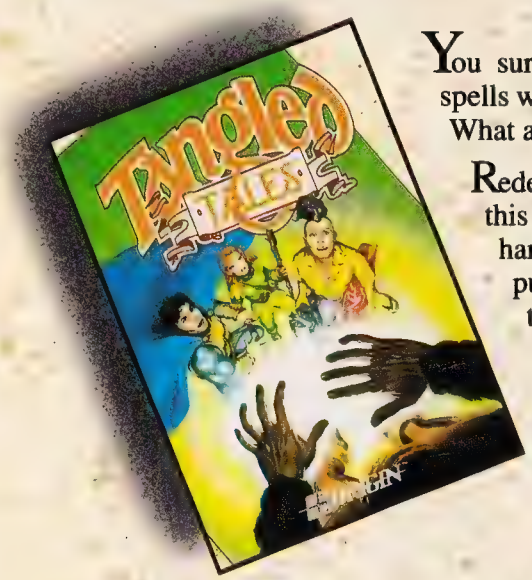
Tangled TALES™

Myth, Magic and Mirth

Screens shown are for Apple II.



What do a "tubed-out" California surfer, a knight in shining armor and a Shakespeare-spouting elf maiden have in common? Typically nothing! But you'll recruit this off-beat crew and meet more than 50 other peculiar characters in TANGLED TALES, the Misadventures of a Wizard's Apprentice.



You sure aren't the wizard's star pupil. In fact, he took away your spells when you spilled his precious adamantite dust on the squirrel. What a mess that turned out to be!

Redeem yourself, fill your spell book and save Violet Valley on this fractured journey where time stands still — or maybe just hangs around. It's filled with stirring combat and perplexing puzzles, and features dazzling graphics with animated illustrations, 3-D dungeons and detailed overhead views.

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the left, and so on. To play a note appearing below the staff, push the rightmost (sixth) skull.

Castle Brunwald/Germany

4 On the second floor of the castle, there's a chest containing a uniform that's too small for Indy. Have him look at it. The key to the lock is in the pocket.

5 Have Indy follow dialog path 3 1 2 1 (third line from the talk menu, then first line, second line, first line). (Indy should already have learned the name of the Nazis' commanding officer from the drunk on the ground floor.) Be sure Indy's wearing the grey uniform from this point on.

6 Fill Colonel Vogel's trophy with ale and give it to Biff. Then deck him.

7 There's a first aid kit on the wall in a room near the foot of the second floor stairs.

8 The silver key is hidden in a candle holder in the room with the couch, in the lower left (southwest) corner of the third floor.

9 Have Indy pull (or Henry push) the chairs across the room. If Indy touched the suit of armor before he found Henry, the axe made a mark on the floor on which you can align the space between the chairs. Have Indy push the suit of armor (save the game first; misalignment can get messy).

10 Henry should stand to screen right of the man reading the newspaper in the airport and ask him about his grandchildren. Switch to Indy and have him take the tickets from the man's coat pocket.

11 Have Henry use his coins in the bowl on the piano and select a tune. When the radio operator leaves the radio room, switch to Indy and get the wrench from the locker (you can buy some time by having Indy open the radio). Use the wrench in the hole to lower the ladder leading to the interior of the Zeppelin.

12 You can breeze through all the checkpoints if you have a travel pass signed by Hitler. At Castle Brunwald, have Indy wear the servant's uniform when he confronts the guard outside the painting room in the second floor. Give that guard the painting from Henry's house. Later, in Colonel Vogel's office, you'll find an unsigned travel pass in the filing cabinet. When Colonel Vogel captures Indy and Henry, give him the real Grail Diary. After you escape the castle, Henry will force Indy to go to Berlin to retrieve it. Give the travel pass to Hitler and he'll autograph it.

Iskenderun

13 On page 56 of the Grail Diary that came in your game package, there's a picture of that scene, with an "X" marking the spot to which Indy should walk.

14 As soon as Indy walks in from the left-hand tunnel, click on the right-hand tunnel. Right away. Don't diddle around. Just do it.

Zak Mckracken and the Alien Mindbenders

15 Use the lighter from the plane. You need to distract the stewardess in a two step process: Use the toilet paper in the sink in the bathroom, turn on the sink, and press the call button. Head for the front of the plane (you'll pass the stewardess on her way to clean up the flood) and blow up the egg in the microwave oven. When she discovers that mess, you'll have plenty of time to search the plane. Check all the overhead bins. Pay particular attention to the cushion on the empty seat (the lighter is under it).

16 Stay on the biplane to the Bermuda until it's beamed aboard the Caponian spaceship. In the inner room, you'll find a machine called a Lott-O-Dictor. Read it to learn what the winning lotto number is going to be.

17 If Zak's really broke, the plane will be available. The preferred method, however, is for Zak to be trained in the use of the blue crystal, because he'll need to use it at one of the destinations.

18 Have Zak or Annie give the golf club to the shaman in Kinshasa, Zaire. He and two villagers will perform a dance at the end of which they line up in the same configuration as the buttons on the door. Note the order in which they squat; that's the order in which you need to push the buttons.

19 This is one of a number places where you'll need to complete strange markings; most of the correct patterns will be found somewhere on Mars. They are always associated with images (statues, drawings...) that relate to the location at which they must be used. In this case, the proper strange markings will be found on a giant statue in the Great Chamber on Mars.

20 Put the two crystal shards and the flagpole from in front the jail in Nepal on the altar stone in Stonehenge. Have Annie read the scroll.

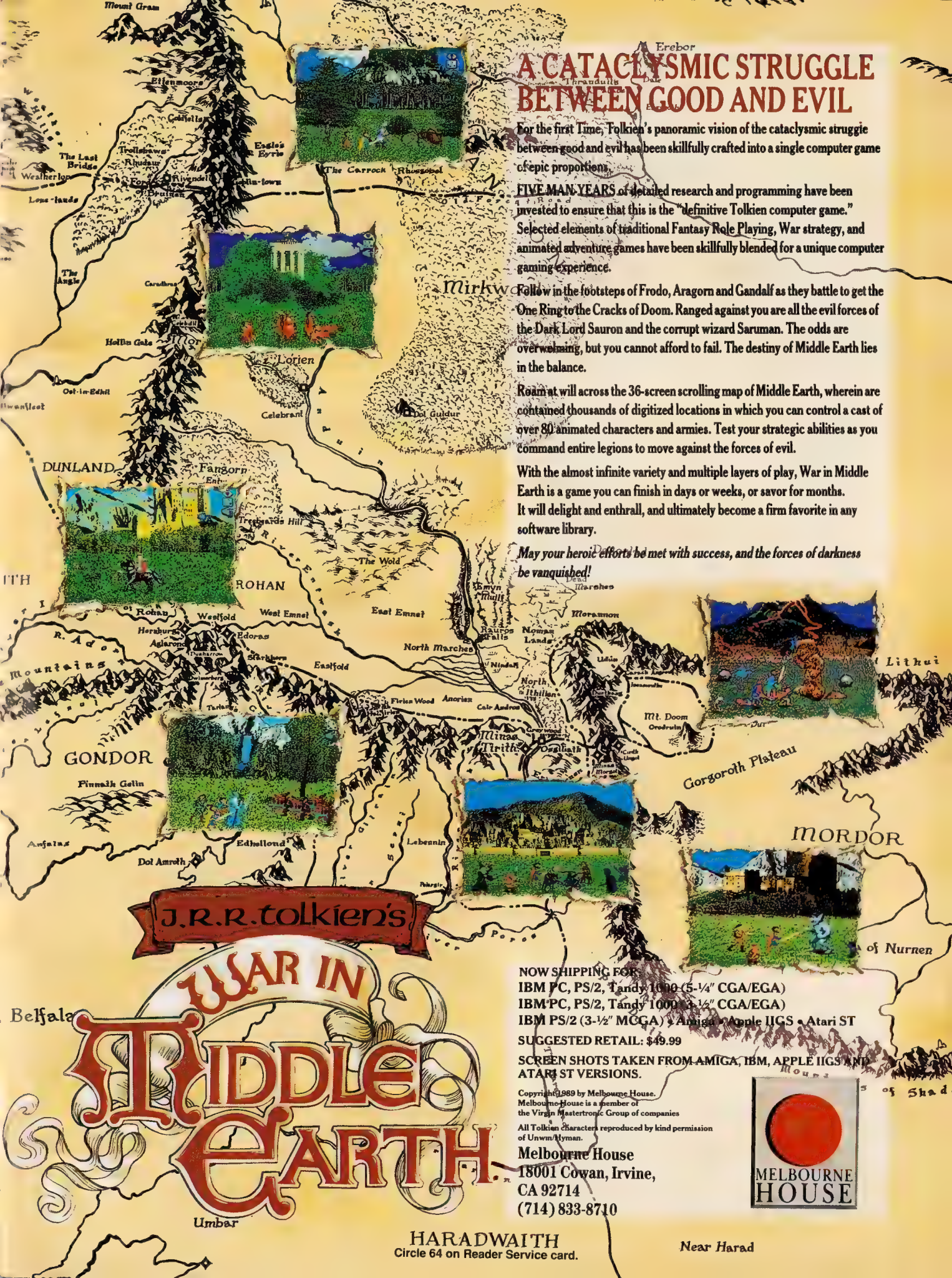
21 Have Annie use the yellow crayon with Zak's teleportation map after she's seen the map in the sphinx.

Maniac Mansion

22 The combination is written under the safe, but to read it you'll have to magnify it using the telescope in the room entered through the hatch above the man-eating plant. To make the plant grow, give it a jar of swimming pool water. Then give it a can of Pepsi, so it won't bite you as you climb up.

23 Station one kid by the fuse box, ready to turn off the power. Station another kid, equipped with tools (found in the trunk of the Weird Edsel) and a flashlight (found in the kitchen) with fresh bat-teries (found in the radio at the swim-ming pool) next to the wires. Have the kid by the fuse box turn off the power, then switch to the kid by the wires and fix them.

24 Play the Meteor Mess video game after Dr. Fred has played it. The combination for the inner door is the high score. ■



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INSIDE MOVES

Connecting Point

By George Fontaine

A Shareware Gem

Playing computer card games can be mundane and repetitive—requiring a lot of luck. If you're like me, you'll end up playing the game a few times, then putting it away forever. Well, fasten your seat belts because this one is different! Mille Bornes, a French card game originally sold by Parker Brothers, is now in Shareware .

The game simulates a car rally in Europe. In each leg, play an exact total of 700 kilometers in distance cards before your opponent does. Scoring in each race follows specific set rules; points are awarded and accumulated after each race. The first player to accumulate 5000 points wins.

At the beginning of a race, each player is dealt six cards. Each player alternately takes a card from the draw pile and either plays or discards it. To prevent you from playing your distance cards, your computer opponent may play a hazard card, if it has one. Before you can continue playing distance cards, you must play an appropriate remedy card. In addition to remedy cards, safety cards can protect you from hazard cards, and you gain extra points by using safety cards against hazard cards. Selecting the right card to discard or play is crucial to winning.

After playing this game for several hours, I found myself utterly addicted to it. No two games are ever alike, and your computer opponent is definitely not a pussycat.

The EGA graphics and the interface in this game are excellent. Each group of items in the screen is in its own GEM Window. If you don't like the default set up of the screen, drag the windows into a new arrangement and save the new settings. Mille Bornes works with a mouse or a keyboard, but a mouse is preferable. Move an arrow around the screen to select an item.

The author requests $30 if you register Mille Bornes, and he'll send you a complete game programmer's toolkit, including the source code and a Monopoly designer kit filled with neat routines and images. The tool kits alone are worth the $30. Mille Bornes is available on all major commercial services and BBS's as MILLEBV4.ZIP, or you can obtain copy directly from the author:

Richard Tom
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Coquitlam, British Columbia
Canada, V3K 2B9

George Fontaine is the sysop of the RHS RBBS in Maui, Hawaii. He is the co-author of Public Domain Software and Shareware: Untapped Resources for the Business User from M&T Books.

Command Line

By Richard Frick

Using Batch Files

I store all my games in subdirectories of a master directory called GAMES. I also have a special directory that contains all my batch files except AUTOEXEC. BAT (which must be in the root directory).

1) Create a new directory named "Bat". Be sure you are in the root directory of your hard disk. Now type *MD BAT* and press Enter to create a new directory named BAT. To create the batch files, switch to this directory (*CD BAT*).
2) Create a batch file for each game: Use a word processor that saves files in ASCII format or use the DOS COPY command. For the game ROCKET RANGER in the directory GAMES in the subdirectory RKTRNGR, you'd create this batch file. Type:

```
COPY CON RKTRNGR.BAT
CD\GAMES\RKTRNGR
EGA
CD\ [F6]
```

Press Enter after each line. The final [F6] means hit the F6 function key (then press Enter). You'll see a ^Z. In this example, the command "EGA" starts ROCKET RANGER in EGA graphics mode. Of course, for different games you use a different directory and a different startup command.

3) MS-DOS uses the Path setting to find certain files, even when they aren't in the current directory. To find the current Path setting, type:

```
PATH [Enter]
```

To modify the Path, modify your AUTOEXEC.BAT using a word processor that saves to ASCII or EDLIN. To use EDLIN, start in the root directory and type:

```
EDLIN AUTOEXEC.BAT
```

Next, type the letter L (for List) to see the batch file listing. **If there's no Path statement, type:**

```
I
PATH=\BAT
[Ctrl]C
```

The letter I means (I)nsert. The [Ctrl]C stands for Control-C (hold down the Ctrl key and press the C key). You'll see ^C onscreen.

If there is a Path statement, type its line number, and press Enter. Now press [F3] and the entire line is reproduced. To append the new PATH information, type:

```
;\BAT [Enter]
```

Press (L)ist again to make sure the change is correct, then press E (for Exit) to save the changes and return to DOS. Or hit Q (for Quit) not to save.

Finally, reboot your computer and run each of your games by typing the name of the batch file for that game. ■

Game-related problems? Or tips of your own? Write to The Command Line at P.O. Box 25238, San Mateo, CA 94402.

The Prognosticator

By Rich Heimlich

Just because Christmas has already passed, don't think that things at the test center are slowing down. Games for the new year are better than ever. Let's look at what's coming your way in the near future.

Dragon's Lair was the first game to use laser disc technology, and it became one of the most popular games ever to appear in arcades. It's combination of incredible graphics and superior sound was unlike anything ever produced before. Dragon's Lair I should be available for the PC by the time you read this—with animation to blow you away. Rooms come alive with creatures and puzzles of every kind. Though only 10 of the original 40 rooms are included, these 10 alone represent over 100 megabytes of data compressed onto 13 floppy disks! And only the necessary sounds like swinging your sword and completing a puzzle correctly are present. Otherwise, would you believe 25 disks? Despite these scarifices, Dragon's Lair I retains almost all of the appeal of the original game. Timing is critical or, just as in the original, Dirk bites the dust in a ghastly manner. It may only be a small chunk of the total arcade verison, but Dragon's Lair I will keep you glued in your seat for many hours of fun and adventure.

Over the years we've seen a number of fine naval simulators. Most notable of these games has been 688 Attack Sub from Electronic Arts. As of late January, 688 should have some very stiff competition with the release of Wolf Pack from Broderbund Software. The graphics supplied by Wolf Pack are so good that this World War II simulation seems very real. Experience the thrill of naval warfare from many aspects. Command American and German subs or ships, or captain a merchant marine ship if you like. Take on German submarines from the deck of an American Destroyer equipped with everything you need from sonar to depth charges. How about taking on an entire fleet of American ships while you command a Nazi U-Boat? You can even play another friend via a modem option. Wolf Pack is complete with combat scenarios of varying difficulties and even comes with its own construction set when you tire of the supplied missions.

Direct from the grocery store shelves to your PC, those free-spirited little "spots" from the Seven-Up cans are coming in the form of a board game called Spot. You know those little cartoon characters who play baseball with carrot sticks or surf on a pickle? Oh, those Spots... The main object of the game is to "infest" the largest amount of the playing surface. The animated Spots love to impress you with their ability to hop, skip, jump, or even pole vault around the board. Spot should be out early in 1990. Be forewarned. It's addicting!

Rich Heimlich is President of TSCS, Inc., a quality assurance testing firm specializing in entertainment software. ■

Please feel free to write to me with any comments and suggestions, questions or requests concerning this column.

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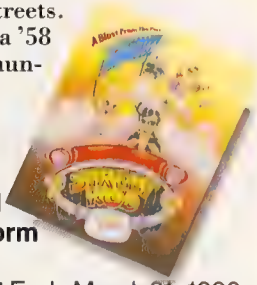

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Under the Rainbow

By Rusel DeMaria

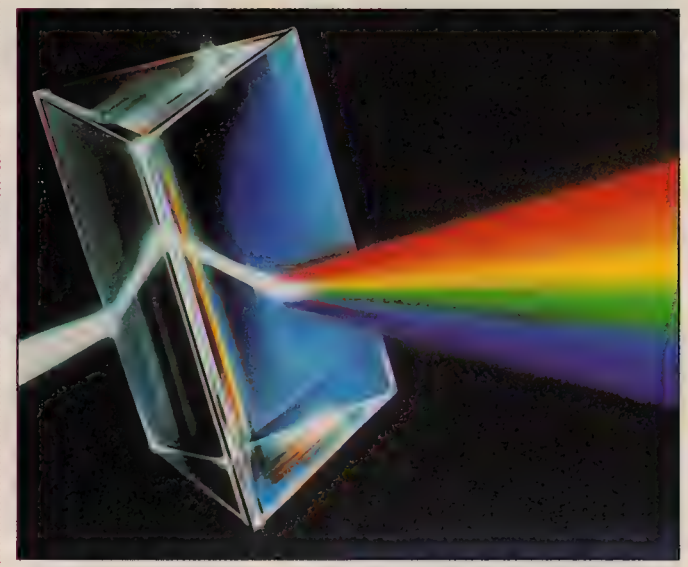
Outside the floor-length window, the gray clouds floated low over rock-strewn hills. Old oak trees, gnarled and immense, sheltered the emerald grass while, beyond their protection, thick drops slowly painted the earth. As I listened to my companions, I kept glancing out the window. Thinking I saw something move, I'd look (trying to seem casual about it) for the source of the movement. I was sure that gnomes and wood elves were lurking just outside my vision. My companions seemed not to notice anything out of the ordinary.

This may sound like the beginning of a game plot, or even a review article, but it isn't. It's a description of a meeting I attended early in 1989. Seated with me at a round wooden table were Kim Domino, Mary Bihr, and Brian Moriarty. We were in the "stables" at Skywalker Ranch, the home of Lucasfilm Games.

The subject under discussion was a new game Brian was designing. Brian's previous successes at Infocom (Trinity, Beyond Zork, Wishbringer) had led him to the conclusion that he wanted to do something entirely new. He wanted to create a fantasy story that didn't borrow excessively from the usual cliche-ridden plots. I shifted my attention between his descriptions and the unseen visitations in the woods beyond the window.

Brian's new game, Loom, would feature a world where trade unions had become akin to religions. The story begins in the Weaver's union, where inbreeding has reduced their numbers and no new children have been born for a long time. Brian explained that the weavers were once weavers of cloth alone, but that now they have evolved into weavers of reality who worship the Great Loom, the patterns of which help them divine the future.

The weavers have lost the knowledge and confidence to change the pattern in the Great Loom. But one woman secretly meddles with the weave to restore a baby lost in childbirth. The elders of the guild punish her by turning her into a swan, but the boy, Bobbin, remains in the guild.



As Brian outlined the story, we all made suggestions and explored the story in different ways. It turns out that, on Bobbin's 17th birthday, his mother returns and transforms all the weavers into swans, saving Bobbin from a certain death at their hands. Bobbin is left alone to discover where the other weavers have gone, why they want to kill him, and how to bring them back.

Bobbin's only tool is the magic staff and a small store of spells. His task is to leave the weavers' island and set forth on a quest of discovery.

Brian further explained that he wanted a different kind of interface, not your usual adventure game verb/noun parser, but something completely different. So, it turns out that Bobbin can only affect his environment through magic.

To make the game even more interesting, each of Bobbin's spells is a series of four musical notes. Part of Bobbin's task is to learn these musical spells, then play them back on the magic staff.

And all the while (outside the window), unseen woodland creatures dance and tease; hiding behind rocks and trees, blending into green leaves and brown soil like chameleons.

Then Doug Glen arrived and the mood changed from fairy tale to marketing and scheduling. Decisions about package art, a high production story tape that would accompany the game, copy protection.... Suddenly, the magical creatures outside fled. I could tell, even if I couldn't see them. Of course, I suspect that Brian could see them still.

****

Drudgery. Cut it, afix it, stuff it, seal it–again and again.

How did I get here?

It was the next day, and this time I was at Broderbund's offices only a few miles from Skywalker Ranch. In contrast to the fantasy of Lucasfilm, Broderbund is like most software companies. No pretend stables, no lakes, no 10,000 ft² post-production facilities.

What's remarkable is that the creative work goes on anywhere. You don't have to be surrounded by forest creatures to be creative. It's just nicer.

The day before I was sitting in on an early design meeting for a game nearly a year from completion. Today was much more mundane:

You know those reader service cards you find inside magazines like PCGames? You circle the numbers to receive more information. You know what I mean?

Well, if you're like me, you probably never gave them much thought. Just circle a few numbers and drop the card in the mail. Computers sort the cards and send out form letters. Right?

Well, I'm here to tell you that there's more to it than meets the eye. I spent several hours tearing or cutting off address labels and stuffing envelopes to answer those bloody cards. And I didn't even scratch the surface of the boxful in front of me. The mythical computer was nowhere to be seen.

And that's how I know that it takes a lot of different kinds of work–and different kinds of workers–to produce and support games. One day, the sublime. The next day, the mundane. And that's what it's like Under the Rainbow. ■

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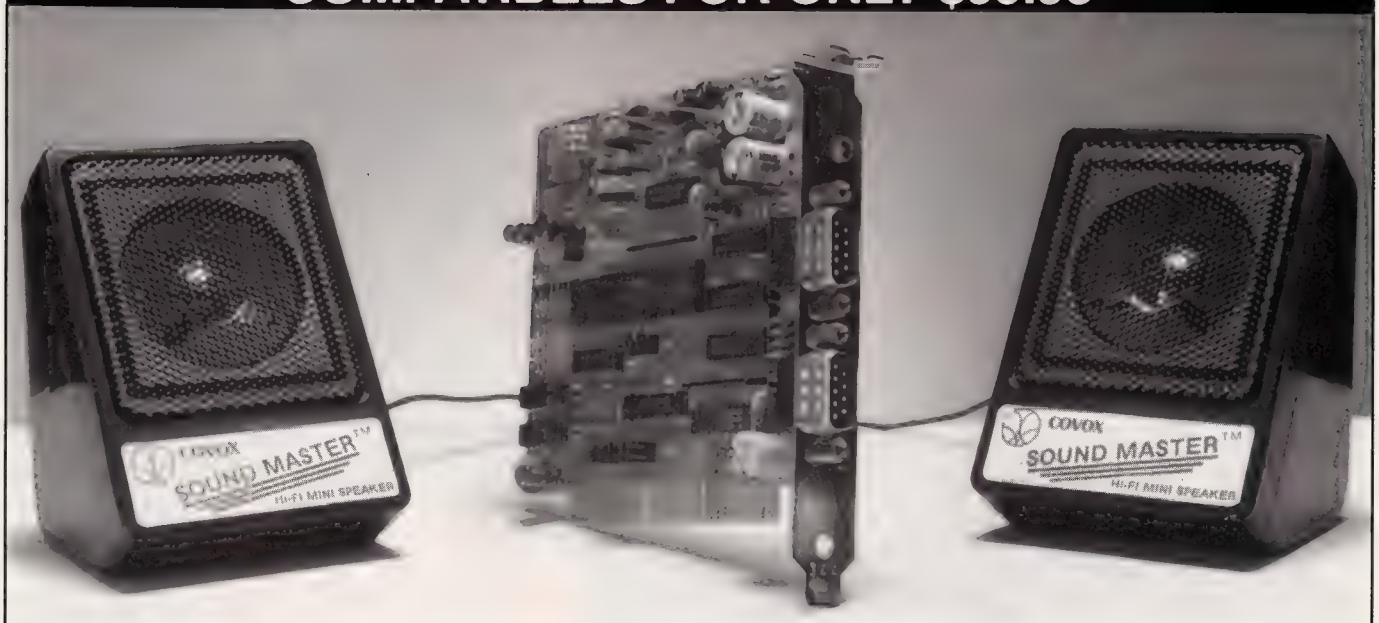

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Lucasfilm's Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade

System requirements: IBM PC, XT, AT, or compatible with 256K RAM, DOS 2.0 or higher, CGA, EGA, or monochrome graphics adaptor, and headset or external speaker.

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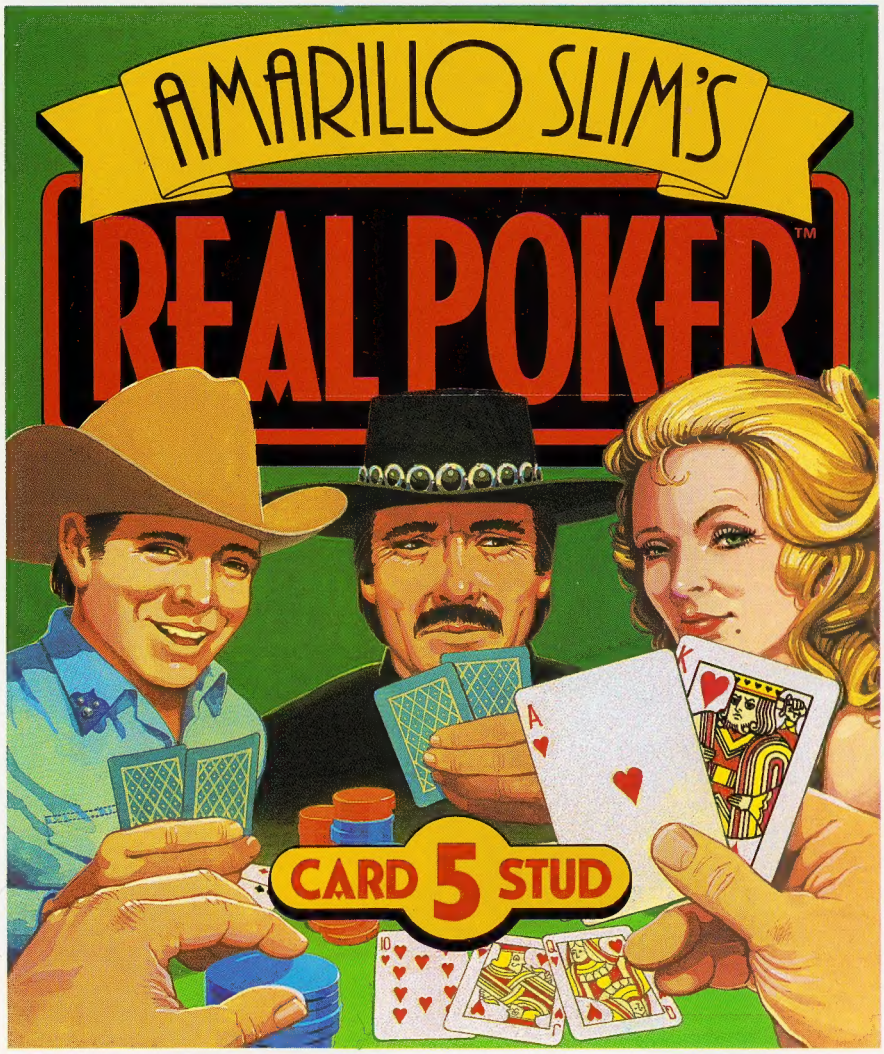
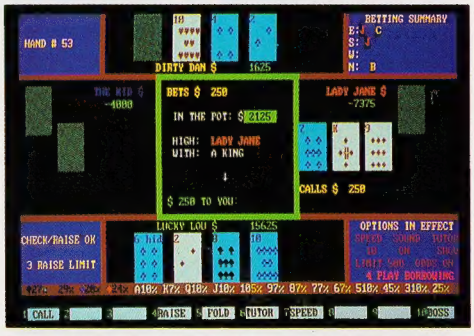
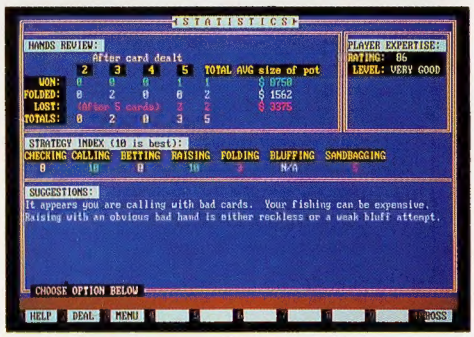
Circle 83 on Reader Service card.

YOU ARE INVITED TO PLAY...






STATISTICS
HANDS REVIEW:
After card dealt
TOTAL AVG size of pot
PLAYER EXPERTISE:
RATING: 86
LEVEL: VERY GOOD
STRATEGY INDEX (10 is best):
CHECKING CALLING BETTING RAISING FOLDING BLUFFING SANDBAGGING
SUGGESTIONS:
It appears you are calling with bad cards. Your fishing can be expensive.
Raising with an obvious bad hand is either reckless or a weak bluff attempt.
CHOOSE OPTION BELOW

Screens taken from an IBM AT with EGA graphics. Others may vary.

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Equipment required: IBM PC or Compatible, CGA, EGA or VGA color graphics. IBM is a Trademark of the IBM Corporation.

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